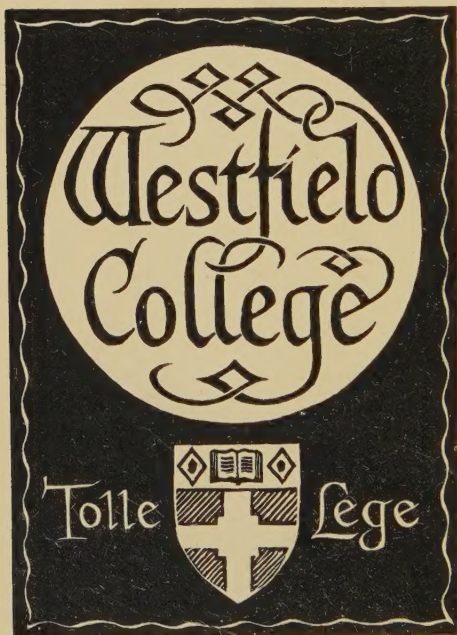


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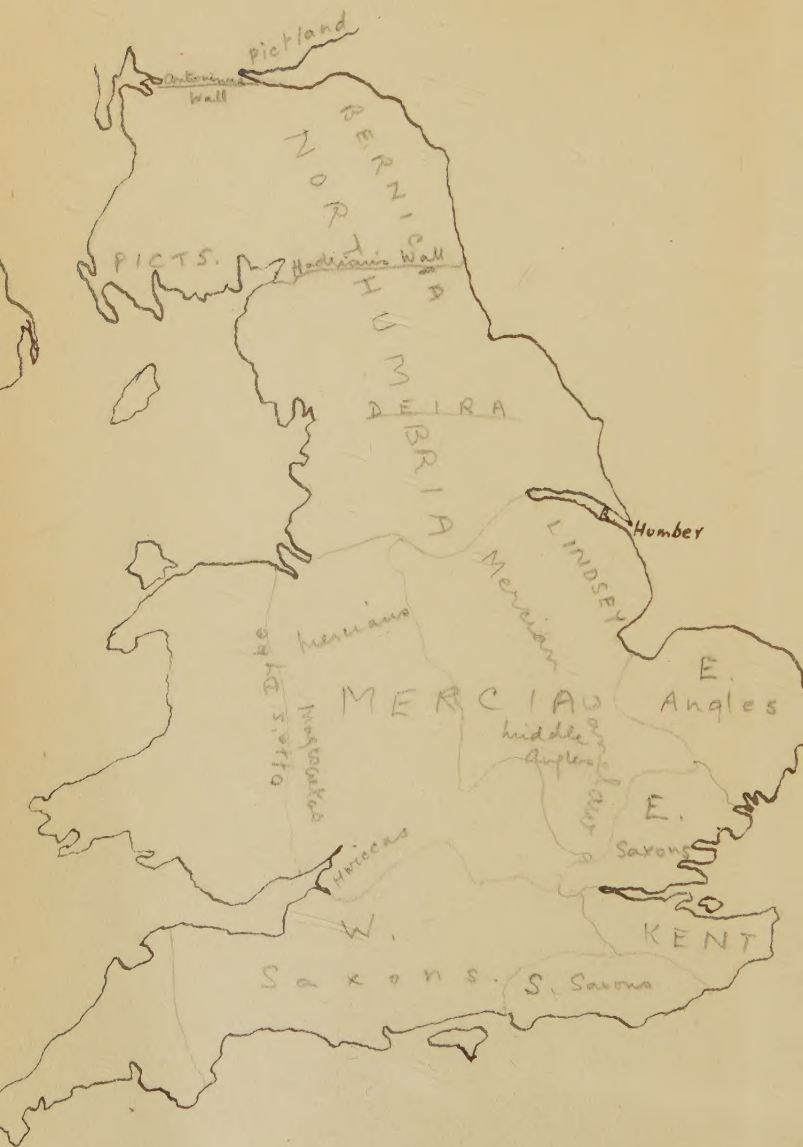
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BY

R. W. CHAMBERS, M.A., D.Lit.

QUAIN PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

WITH A FOREWORD ON ROMAN BRITAIN BY

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INTRODUCTION.

The Period and its Problems.

It is perhaps necessary to ask the reader of this book not to try to remember too much of it. The object is to illustrate the way in which the history of the earliest England has to be constructed. For example, the pedigree of the Mercian kings¹ and the list of Northumbrian rulers² are given to show the kind of material which the earliest chroniclers found to hand, and wove into their records. From the Northumbrian list the student can confirm the truth of Bede's statement, that the reigns of impious kings had been cancelled, and their brief span added to the reign of their saintly successor.³ Having noted this, the student may as well dismiss for ever from his memory the lengths of the reigns of these seventeen monarchs. In the same way, the extracts from the West Saxon *Genealogical Note*,⁴ and from the *Chronicle*,⁵ are given to show that there is a discrepancy: the precise character of that discrepancy is less important; it is our business to understand methods, not to memorise dates.

Some dates, nevertheless, are worth remembering. Most of us, in infancy, learnt the dates of Julius Cæsar's invasions; and we also learnt that a century elapsed before the campaigns, spread over forty years, which finally won Britain for the Roman Empire (A.D. 43-83). The three centuries which followed, before the withdrawal of the Roman legions began

¹ See below, p. 58.

² P. 101.

³ Pp. 142, 148.

⁴ P. 97.

⁵ P. 98.

under Magnus Maximus (A.D. 383) are almost blank, but must not be overlooked. What would have helped us, would have been a series of familiar letters or lives of ecclesiastics or saints, showing first the Romanisation and then the Christianisation of Britain. But Roman Britain produced few saints, and their history is obscure. We have to be content with the mere names of the British bishops at the Council of Arles (A.D. 314) and must take their saintliness on trust. Yet the period is not really a colourless blank. This book can only give the literary evidence: but the archæological evidence exists. The best way for the reader to fill the gap between the *Foreword* and *Chapter I.* would be to spend a couple of days in walking the Roman Wall from Chesters to Lanercost, with the latest edition of Dr. Collingwood Bruce's *Hand-book*.¹

From the withdrawal of the legions to the landing of the chivalry of Northern France under William the Bastard, every century has its peculiar character. This character becomes the more clearly cut, if we are allowed to reckon most of the centuries as closing a few years before their strict chronological termination. For it is towards the end of these centuries that the key-note of the following period is struck.

It is disputable how far the soldiers of whom Magnus Maximus denuded this land were replaced, although about 395 an attempt was certainly made to re-establish the defences of Britain. The same Roman poet, who in 399 mentions this re-establishment, tells how Britain had been 'fearing the Scottish darts, trembling at the Pict, and watching along all the shore for the Saxon who would come with

¹ If this counsel of perfection cannot be followed, at any rate a walk might be ventured through the British Museum, with the Guides to the Antiquities of the Early Iron Age (1925), of Roman Britain (1922), and to the Anglo-Saxon Antiquities: (1923). For Roman Britain consult F. J. Haverfield, *The Romanization of Roman Britain*, Fourth edit., 1923; R. G. Collingwood, *Roman Britain*, 1923, and G. Macdonald, *The Roman Wall in Scotland*, Glasgow, 1911. For the Anglo-Saxon period, see below, pp. 49-56, footnotes.

any wind.'¹ These lines may be taken as the text for the whole FIFTH CENTURY. For the withdrawal of troops continued; and Britain remained helpless under the attacks of Picts, Scots, cannibal Attacotti (whom historians can place in either Scotland or Ireland as they prefer to annoy the one nation or the other), Angles, Saxons and Jutes. But the end of the Fifth Century was marked by the rally of the British under the heroic Ambrosius Aurelianus.

This rally continues during the SIXTH CENTURY, in the early part of which Arthur must have flourished. The fate of the country is still in the balance. Are the heathen men to win England, or will the Christian British be strong enough gradually to absorb the Teutonic invaders settled on the South and East coasts, as the Romanised Celts of Gaul absorbed Frank and Saxon? In the last quarter of the century Wessex makes great progress under Ceawlin, and at the very end of the century the question is settled by the growth of Northumbria under the great Æthilfrid. Simultaneously, the mission of Augustine begins the conversion of Teutonic heathendom in 597.

The SEVENTH CENTURY is consequently the century of Northumbrian greatness and of the conversion of England, matters which provide the subject of Bede's *History*. But the end of the century is marked by the downfall of Northumbria at Dunnichen Moss (685), whilst with the death of archbishop Theodore, the last of the great alien missionaries, in 690, the period of the Conversion may be reckoned as completed.

The fall of Northumbria leaves the field free for that Mercian supremacy which is the mark of the EIGHTH CENTURY. But the death of the great Offa (796), followed as it was after a few months by that of the son for whose sake he had waded through blood,² marks the beginning of the end of Mercian greatness. Almost at the same time, Scandinavian pirates crossed the North Sea and sacked Lindisfarne (793), a disaster

¹ Claudian, *On Stilicho's Consulship*, II, 253-55.

² See below, p. 196.

which no one thought could have happened, and which contemporaries believed to have been heralded by a rain of blood in York.¹

The NINTH CENTURY is accordingly the century of the Danish onslaught, and of the settlement of Scandinavians in the North and East of England. Northumbria and Mercia were partitioned between 'Danes' and English: the task of resistance fell upon Wessex, which at the beginning of the century had already risen to greatness under Egbert. The last decade was marked by the victorious wars of Egbert's grandson, Alfred the Great; and when he died (c. 900) the 'Danes' had been fought to a standstill.

The TENTH CENTURY is marked by the winning back of these Danish territories under the able but short-lived kings of the house of Alfred, and their statesmanlike advisers. The prestige of this glorious period of victories lasted even into the reign of the incompetent Æthelred, as is shown by the view taken of that monarch in some Icelandic sagas.² We may reckon the great age as ending in 991, when the noble Essex aldorman Byrhtnoth met his death in battle with an even greater opponent, the Norwegian Olaf Tryggvason.³ Æthelred the unready bought off the victor by the payment of Danegelt.⁴ The prosperity of England in this century had depended upon the personality of its leaders, of whom the greatest had passed away with Dunstan in 988.

Yet the ensuing period, from Maldon (991) to Stamford Bridge and Hastings (1066) was not an ignoble one, though it saw four mighty invasions by foreign rulers, and three of them were successful. Amid all disaster, London became the centre of the nation's defence: so that when Milton was searching Old English history for subjects for poetry, this

¹ P. 204.

² In *Gunnlaugssaga Ormstungu*, cap. 6, Æthelred son of Edgar is called 'a good ruler,' and the burden of Gunnlaug's poem in his honour is quoted: 'Everyone speaks [*or*, All his men speak] of Æthelred, the bounteous lord of England, as of God . . .'

³ See below, pp. 260, etc.

⁴ P. 267.

struck him, loyal Londoner as he always was, as an heroic theme.¹ In 994 Olaf and Sweyn were astonished at the resistance they met from the Londoners:² in 1009 the querulous chronicler admits that, often as the Danes had attacked London, there at least 'they had always fared badly.' And many another entry in the years immediately following bears this out.³ Later, London became the centre of the great empire of Cnut, and flourished on the Baltic trade. The shipping of London, anchored below the wooden town which clustered within its Roman walls, must have been a magnificent sight: 'small, but entirely seaworthy vessels, manned by the best seamen in the then world. . . . This Saxon and Danish shipping . . . lay here at London shore—bright with banner and shield and dragon-prow—instead of these you may be happier, but are not handsomer, in having, now, the coal-barge, the penny steamer, and the wherry full of shop boys and girls.'⁴ This period culminates with the consecration of the Confessor's abbey of Westminster on Holy Innocents' Day, 1065, and the victory of Stamford Bridge⁵ in the following September. The story of the preparations for the battle of Hastings and of the battle itself belongs to the book which is to follow this in the series. Hastings begins a new era: the attempt to build up an Anglo-French dominion was to consume much of the energy of English rulers for four centuries. With the Tudors, Britain returns to her destiny on the sea.

The Documents.

The earlier centuries dealt with in this book are, as we have just seen, a dark period, where we have to depend on odd fragments of information, and often on sidelights supplied by archæology or even philology. Yet, for certain portions of this dark period, we have the work of three great historians

¹ Trin. Coll. Camb. MS., fol. 36.

² P. 269.

³ Pp. 273-4.

⁴ Ruskin, *The Pleasures of England*, in *Collected Works*, XXXIII, 442.

⁵ See below, pp. 300, etc.

to draw on: Cæsar, Tacitus and Bede. Bede is strangely modern in his methods: he begins with a list of his authorities, and appends to his *History* a bibliography of his own writings: 'The impression he leaves is that of something different from his age, an exceptional talent escaping from limitations and hindrances. There is no period in the history of Britain or of the English Church in which Bede is antiquated; in every generation he speaks familiarly. The Seventeenth Century is less intelligible to the Eighteenth, the Eighteenth Century more in opposition to the Nineteenth, than Bede to any of them; his good sense is everywhere at home.'¹

Bede ended his history with a chronological summary. This was a thing which the following age found easier to imitate than his sound historical judgment, or his skill in the use of authorities and documents.

For the period of over three centuries, following Bede's death, we have to depend primarily upon the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. A chronicle, in its simplest form, is a register of the dates of matters which there is no need to describe, because their details are common knowledge. From time to time an *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, or group of *Chronicles*, expands into true historical writing, and then sinks back again into a simple chronicle. At a quite late period, about the year 984, the scribe of the *Parker-chronicle* was so unambitious, that he wrote in a column the list of years from 984 to 1006, leaving one line for each year, and trusting that no year would be so eventful as to demand more than that. This hope was disappointed, and the numbers of certain blank years had to be erased, so as to allow scope enough for a peculiarly eventful year (991, entered under 993) which fills four lines and then overflows into the margin. The entry under 1001 again fills up all the space allocated to the next five years, and much margin as well.

It is curious that the Anglo-Saxon period, which for the Seventh Century depends upon so accomplished an historian

¹ W. P. Ker, *The Dark Ages*, p. 141.

as Bede, should, for its later stages, and for the reigns of its most mighty monarchs, Æthelstan or Edgar or Cnut, have to depend upon so primitive a record as the *Chronicle*. Yet, just because its form is so primitive, the *Chronicle* repays careful study. 'We are no longer content,' says Prof. Earle, 'to study history in one or two admirable specimens of mature perfection.' We must study chronicles, 'and nowhere can this form of documentary record be found in a form preferable to that of the Saxon Chronicles.' A record in the vernacular, compiled from earlier sources, and maintained for over two centuries and a half, affords quite extraordinary opportunities to the student.

It was in the reign of king Alfred, and apparently about 890, that the *Chronicle*, as we know it, was drawn up. It certainly copied an earlier West Saxon Chronicle, which in its turn had drawn upon yet earlier sources. It has often been assumed that the home of this earlier chronicle was Winchester. But this is far from certain: the chief glories of Winchester come later, and the primitive chronicle may well have belonged to some more western part of Wessex—say Sherborne.¹ But it must remain a matter of conjecture and inference how the earlier chronicle grew. We know the form in which it stood in the latter part of Alfred's reign, in the year 891 or just after. This *Chronicle* then, 'as drawn up about 890,' is the starting-point of our inquiries, and the phrase is used without prejudice to the difficult question of exactly how far this *Chronicle* reproduced an earlier one.

At this date its character changes. Up to this point all the extant manuscripts can be traced to the same original, of course in most cases through a number of intermediate stages, and with individual omissions and insertions which give to each copy its special character. But after about 890 each copy develops an individual life, although matter drawn from

¹ See F. M. Stenton, 'The South-Western element in the Old English Chronicle,' in *Essays in Mediæval History presented to T. F. Tout*, Manchester, 1925.

A₂, as it is a mere reflexion of A. It was burnt in the great fire of 1731, which destroyed so much of the Cottonian collection, and only a few charred fragments are left. We know its contents, however, from a printed and a written copy made before the fire. But so long as we have the *Parker-MS.* in perfect condition, there is little to be learnt from transcripts of a transcript.

Now with regard to all the other manuscripts of the *Chronicle*, we are much in the position in which we should have been if it had been the *Parker-MS.* which was destroyed, and the Eleventh Century transcript which had survived. There were manuscripts as early and as correct as the *Parker-MS.*, and even more so: but they have been lost, and only their descendants have come down to us. This is regrettable for two reasons: transcripts are naturally less accurate than originals: and the method of entry and changes of handwriting in the originals would have enabled us to see how the *Chronicle* had grown by accretion from generation to generation. In the transcripts this is smoothed over, and all is written out fair in one hand to the date of transcription: or, if there are changes in handwriting, they merely signify that one Anglo-Saxon scribe has taken up the task from another.

A sister manuscript of the *Parker-chronicle*, now lost, but no doubt resembling the extant *Parker-MS.* up to the year 891 (differing only as being here more and there less correctly transcribed from their common original), was sent to some unknown destination. This destination is generally supposed to have been Abingdon, but in Alfred's day Abingdon was a very insignificant house. This manuscript received the continuation narrating Alfred's later wars and those of Edward the Elder: these however were not recorded beyond the year 915. A little chronicle of the Wars of Æthelflæd with the Danes (the *Mercian Register*) was also added: this helped to fill the gap from 915 to 924. This chronicle then received the continuation from Æthelstan to Edgar (924-975), much as it is found in the *Parker-chronicle*. Soon after this, about the year 1000, a transcript was made of this chronicle.

This transcript is our 'B.' At this date the original seems to have been at Abingdon, and the transcript may have been made for S. Augustine's, Canterbury. But those into whose hands the transcript came did not trouble to keep it up to date, and it remained a barren stock. At the Dissolution it seems to have been at S. Augustine's: it came into the Cottonian collection (*Tiberius A. VI*) and is now in the British Museum. The Abingdon copy, on the other hand, *was* kept up: for a few years independently of other chronicles, then came the account of the unsuccessful warfare of the days of Æthelred the Unready and the valiant defence of Edmund Ironside (983-1018). This section (as we shall see later) was also added to other manuscripts, although the *Parker-MS.*, hitherto so valuable, did not receive it; the story is told in full detail, such as has not been found since the reigns of Alfred and Edward the Elder, and ends with the agreement of Danes and English at Oxford. After this the Abingdon chronicle was continued, sometimes independently, sometimes in agreement with other *Chronicles*. Not long before the Norman Conquest (say *c.* 1050) the transcript which has survived (our 'C') was made; the original from which it was copied is lost. 'C' was continued to the year 1066, and ends with the battle of Stamford Bridge. This is not because the patriotic scribe dropped his pen with horror at the news of Hastings, but because the manuscript has been mutilated at this point. How much further it once went we do not know: but the mutilation is early, for in the early Middle English period a scribe supplied the gap and finished off the manuscript by adding the story of the gallant Northman at Stamford Bridge.¹ This *Chronicle C* was numbered *Tiberius B. I* in the Cottonian collection, and can now be seen among the manuscript-exhibits in the British Museum (case E).

Yet another lost copy of the *Chronicle* was sent, probably soon after 890, to some Northern monastery, perhaps Ripon. Here it was expanded by material taken from Bede's *History*,

¹ See below, p. 301.

and also by extracts taken from a (now lost) Northumbrian chronicle which covered the two generations after Bede's death, the *Gesta Veterum Northanhymbrorum*. It also received (though we cannot say exactly when) all the regular additions: Alfred's later Wars, the early Wars of Edward the Elder (to 915), the *Mercian Register*, the continuation from Æthelstan to Edgar (924-975, with many variations), and the story of the days of Æthelred the Unready and Edmund Ironside (983-1018). It was also expanded from a second group (now lost) of Northumbrian *Annals* (901-966). At some uncertain date, this chronicle, or a transcript of it, came South again, to some place in the Worcester diocese (some think Evesham). It was continued independently, and at some time not long before the Norman Conquest—say c. 1050—the actual extant copy, our 'D,' was transcribed. This was continued, till it breaks off, mutilated, at the year 1079. 'D' became part of the Cottonian collection (*Tiberius B. IV*) and may now be seen among the manuscripts exhibited at the British Museum (case F). From its connection with the Worcester diocese in its later stages, this chronicle is often known as the *Worcester Chronicle*.

But when the ancestor of this *Worcester Chronicle* was still in the North, a copy was made, from which our 'E' is ultimately derived. This copy contains the Northumbrian additions from Bede, and from the *Gesta*, and a selection from the later *Annals* (901-966). But it did not receive the West Saxon continuation relating to Alfred's later Wars, nor the section relating to the Wars of Edward the Elder. Neither did it receive the *Mercian Register*. It did, however, receive the Æthelstan-Edgar section (924-975) much in the form in which D received it,¹ and the story of the days of Æthelred the Unready and Edmund Ironside (983-1018). At some uncertain date this chronicle (or a transcript of it) came down to Canterbury (S. Augustine's), and was kept up independently. During the reign of Edward the Confessor

¹ But abbreviated. E has other affinities to D, see below, pp. 241-2.

it shows strong Kentish feeling. Finally, long after the Conquest, a transcript of it was made (doubtless at Peterborough, about 1122, probably as part of an effort to replace the library after the great fire at Peterborough in 1116). This transcript was continued, and finally, about 1155, received, at Peterborough, the famous addition describing the Anarchy of Stephen's reign, with which English historical prose disappears, not to revive again till the Fifteenth Century. This Peterborough transcript, then, is our 'E'; it came at length into the possession of archbishop Laud, and was given by him to Oxford, where it can now be seen in the Bodleian (*Laud*, 636). The earlier copy or copies, which had first gone North and then come South to Canterbury, have been lost, and therefore this recension is always known as the *Peterborough Chronicle*. But for the period with which we are concerned it has nothing essential to do with Peterborough. It is first a Northumbrian recension of a West Saxon Chronicle, and later a *Canterbury Chronicle*, copied with some Peterborough insertions.

Finally there is 'F' (*Cotton, Domitian A. VIII*). This was an epitome, made, after the Conquest, at Canterbury, from the same original as that from which 'E' was a little later transcribed at Peterborough. F is accompanied by a Latin translation, and is interesting as showing the transition from English to Latin as the medium for writing history. Otherwise it is unimportant.

There are three periods before the Conquest during which the Chronicle ceases to be a mere list of dated events, and expands into true history: these are the times of Alfred and his son Edward: of Æthelred the Unready and his son Edmund, and of Edward the Confessor and Harold. For the other periods we have the barest facts: mere headings which would enable a man learned in traditional poetry to fit events into their right order. When we compare the poem on the *Battle of Maldon* with the dry Chronicle entry of that battle, we must remember that to men of the Tenth Century many another dry annal suggested memories equally heroic: 'For in their laconic annals much was implied and little

expressed. To posterity they present merely a name or two, as of a battlefield and a victor, but to the men of the day they suggested a thousand particulars, which they in their comrade life were in the habit of recollecting and putting together. That which to us seems a lean and barren sentence, was to them the text for a winter evening's entertainment.' ¹

The same reflections are suggested if we compare the dry entry under 786 (784) recording the number slain with Cyneheard at *Meretun*, with the vivid story which has been incorporated into the *Chronicle* at an earlier point. We do not know that heroic prose narrative ever developed among the Anglo-Saxons, as heroic poetry undoubtedly did. But in Iceland such development *did* take place: and in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries we are sometimes able to compare the vivid narrative of a Saga with the dry (but chronologically more dependable) statements of the *Chronicle*.²

Reasons for Selection.

In the selection of extracts preference has been given to those where the event narrated was itself important, and where the extract also illustrated the methods which must be used in comparing and weighing sources. Want of space has entailed severe restrictions, especially in extracts from Icelandic sources, where in many cases the historic value is disputable, however high the literary merit. For the same reason romantic tales have had to be omitted, such as those recorded by Procopius,³ the Vortigern and Rowena stories from the *Historia Brittonum*,⁴ the ballads concerning later

¹ Plummer, II, xxi.

² See below, pp. 302-5. Recent research has tended, on the whole, to confirm a belief in the possibility of oral tradition recording historical facts with considerable accuracy. *Beowulf* has been confirmed by recent excavations in Sweden (see below, p. 53), and, for more recent times, Professor Knut Liestøl, of Oslo, has been able to demonstrate the substantial accuracy of local traditions preserved in Norwegian home-steads during the last three centuries.

³ See pp. 68, 100, below.

⁴ See p. 69, below.

kings, of which the substance has been recorded by William of Malmesbury, and the still more doubtful cases where we cannot be sure whether Henry of Huntingdon is drawing upon a ballad or upon his imagination.

In certain cases of doubt, preference has been given to the extract which is less known: that is why the story of Cædmon does not appear. Certain very important documents have been omitted because their obscurity would have necessitated a quite disproportionate amount of comment. Examples of these are the *Tribal Hidage*¹ and the *Burghal Hidage*.² The *Laws* have received less space than they would otherwise have had, because they are now accessible to English students in the good and convenient editions of Mr. Attenborough and Miss Robertson.

Place-names and Proper Names.

The great work done by Dr. Plummer on Bede and on the *Chronicle*, between thirty-five and twenty-five years ago, is the basis of our present knowledge; but in some details, recent philological research has added to this knowledge, and nowhere so much as by the scientific study of place-names which has been pursued during the past fifteen years. Professor Allen Mawer has recently taken stock of the position we have reached in this matter, in a short article of peculiar importance.³ Professor Mawer has to regret that 'unfortunately the results so far attained are more often negative and destructive than positive and constructive:' they tend to throw doubt upon identifications previously accepted more frequently than to confirm new ones. But Professor Mawer is certainly carrying scepticism too far when he even doubts the identification of *Streoneshalh* with Whitby. The identification would be certain on historical and archæological grounds, even if the study of place-names justified scepticism, which I do not believe to be the case. Forgiveness is the last

¹ Birch, *Cart. Sax.*, No. 297.

² *Ibid.*, No. 1335.

³ In *Anglica, Untersuchungen . . . Alois Brandl zum siebenzigsten Geburtstage überreicht* (Palæstra, 147), 1925.

refuge of malignity: but no Yorkshireman born between the heather and the sea will lightly forgive Professor Mawer for his doubts.

The treatment of Old English proper names presents serious difficulties. Where the name is current at the present day, that form is given, 'Edwin' 'Egbert' 'Alfred' 'Edgar.' Otherwise the form is usually given as it occurs in the document being translated: when that document gives variant forms, and both are of good authority, that form is chosen which comes nearest to the one currently used.

One and the same name varied, of course, in different Old English dialects: and even in the same dialect it changed during the six centuries with which we are concerned. But three simple sound changes, if kept in mind, will account for most of the variants:

(1) During the Eighth Century *i* in unaccented syllables became *e*. Hence the West Saxon lawgiver, who called himself 'Ini,' and who was so called by Bede, is called 'Ine' by his successor Alfred in the Ninth Century. But this change affects unaccented syllables only: that is, generally, syllables not first in the word. 'Eni' is a different name from 'Ini.'

(2) At a yet earlier date, but not, however, in all the dialects, before certain combinations of consonants, the vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, were 'broken' or diphthongised into *ea*, *eo*, *io*, and these might again be 'smoothed' into monophthongs different from the original vowel. Hence 'Æthelward' is 'broken' into 'Æthelweard' and 'smoothed' into 'Æthelwerd.'

(3) The *r*-sound may be shifted so as to come either after or before a vowel, as in the modern variants 'Bridlington' 'Burlington.' Hence we may have either *Brihtferth* or *Birhtferth*, which by 'breaking' may become *Biorhtferth*, *Beorhtferth*. The 'ferth' element is equally unstable: 'ferth,' 'firth,' 'fird,' or 'freth,' 'frith,' 'frid.'

Chronology.

The Old English practice of reckoning the lengths of the reigns of each monarch, rather than the year, A.D., when each

reign began and ended, tended to keep a clear record of the distance of time between certain leading events, but made it easy for a whole series to get dislocated, and inaccurately dated. We see a somewhat parallel confusion in other annals, such as the Irish *Annals* of Tigernach, in which each year is distinguished from its predecessor, but for long stretches it is not clear exactly to which year A.D. each member of the series is intended to refer. Transcription also led to error. Thus in all extant manuscripts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* there is a dislocation of some two years from the middle of the Eighth to the middle of the Ninth Century.

The *Parker-MS.* illustrates yet another way in which dislocation occurred—by deliberate, but mistaken, correction. In the *Parker-MS.*, all the years from 892 to 929 were increased by one, by a corrector, at a much later date. Now all editions of the *Chronicle* reproduce the corrected date: so that, e.g., the *Parker-MS.* is represented as putting the death of Alfred under 901. But the scribe who made the entry, not very long after Alfred's death, put it under the year 900: the correction is without authority, for it was not made till between two and four generations later (between c. 955 and c. 1025).

We have still to decide what the scribe of the *Parker-MS.* meant by the year 900. Bede used the Cæsarean indiction,¹ which began on Sept. 24. It follows that the events which he dates, if they occur between Sept. 24 and Dec. 31, are put into what we should call the following year. It has recently been shown that the same reckoning holds good for the early part of Alfred's reign.² And the problem why the Danes, in 851,

¹ See Plummer's *Bede*, II, 39.

² Murray L. R. Beaven, 'The Regnal Dates of Alfred, Edward the Elder, and Athelstan,' and 'The Beginning of the Year in the Alfredian Chronicle (866-87),' *Eng. Hist. Rev.* xxxii. (1917), p. 517, and xxxiii. (1918), p. 328. See also, on this question, Reginald L. Poole, 'The Beginning of the Year in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles,' *Eng. Hist. Rev.* xvi. (1901), p. 719; A. Anscombe in the *British Numismatic Journal*, IV, pp. 241 etc., V, pp. 381, etc.; and R. H. Hodgkin, 'The Beginning of the Year in the English Chronicle,' *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xxxix. (1924), p. 497.

ventured for the first time to winter in England, despite their severe defeat at Oakley, is solved if the wintering did not follow, but preceded the defeat. After the drawing up and circulation of the *Chronicle* in its present form, about 890, the year seems to have been usually reckoned from Christmas: but there were occasional lapses into the older reckoning; and it has been argued with great probability that the scribe who entered the death of Alfred six nights before All Hallows, 900, meant what we should have called Oct. 26, 899. As the death of Æthelstan took place 'forty winters, save one night,' after that of Alfred, this carries with it a consequential alteration of the date of Æthelstan's death: Oct. 25, 939 [really Oct. 27].

Finally, in the Eleventh Century, especially in *Chronicle C* after 1044, we get clear instances of not reckoning the year as beginning till the following March 25.

Translations.

The translation of Bede's *History* is based upon the version which Thomas Stapleton, the Roman Catholic exile, made early in the reign of Elizabeth, in the hope of converting that queen. Bede, the first great scholar of the English Church, can best be rendered in the language of the time which gave us the Prayer Book and the English Bible. But Stapleton translated, not always accurately, from a bad text. His translation has therefore been checked with Plummer's edition, which follows the 'Moore' MS., which must have been written within a year or two of Bede's death. For the proper names, I have often followed the reading of the Cotton MS. (*Tiberius C. II*), which is Northumbrian and Eighth Century. Further, the translation of Bede's *History* made under king Alfred gives us a helpful Anglo-Saxon rendering of Bede's Latin terms for legal and administrative affairs: this has been compared, and the modern equivalent of the term used in the Alfredian translation has been inserted (e.g. 'aldorman' or 'thane'). The Bede translations, although based on Stapleton, do not therefore profess to reproduce his version with any exactness.

Apart from this, the translations are mostly my own (though in translating the *Chronicle* I have sometimes borrowed phrases from Thorpe). There are some noteworthy exceptions. The translation of the *Battle of Maldon* was made many years ago by W. P. Ker, and is now printed for the first time: the stories of the death of Bede and the plague at Lindisfarne are given in the translation given by Dr. Plummer in the Introduction to his edition of the *Opera Historica* of Bede. This little book is fortunate in being allowed to include something of the work of these two great scholars, to whom it owes so much. For permission to do this I have to thank Dr. Plummer, and the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, and the Trustees of the late W. P. Ker. The extract from the *Battle of Brunanburh* is given in Tennyson's translation, and the page from Saxo Grammaticus in the translation of Professor Elton (*Folk Lore Society: David Nutt*), because in each case the spirit of the original is reproduced in a way which cannot be rivalled. For permission, I have to thank the present Lord Tennyson, and Professor Elton. Finally, the passages from the *Heimskringla* are given in the version of Samuel Laing (1844), after revision with the original Icelandic. The scaldic verses scattered through the *Heimskringla* must be the despair of any translator: Laing's verses do at any rate give the general impression in a spirited way. But the reader must not suppose that they represent the originals at all accurately.

Dr. M. Cary wishes to add his thanks to Dr. T. Rice Holmes and the Clarendon Press; to Mr. William Heinemann and the editors of the Loeb Series, with the translator, E. Cary; to Mr. John Murray and to Messrs. Macmillan & Co.

I have to thank Mr. Bruce Dickins for having read the proofs of this book, and for having placed at my disposal his exceptional combination of historical and philological knowledge; Mr. Harold W. Mattingly, for information about coins; Mr. J. H. G. Grattan for help in some syntactical problems of the Anglo-Saxon Laws; Miss E. C. Batho for help in

transcribing and collating Stapleton's Bede; and Miss W. Husbands, for help with the Index. Finally my very special thanks are due to Professor Pollard, for having invited one who does not belong to the guild of historians to join a brilliant group of his students in contributing to this series of Source Books; as well as for the sympathy which both he and Professor Newton have shown to this desperate effort to compress the extracts within the limits of space allowed.

FOREWORD ON ROMAN BRITAIN

BY

M. CARY, M.A., D.LITT.

It is a peculiar feature of our knowledge concerning pre-Saxon Britain that it is entirely derived from foreign sources.

The first written record concerning the British Isles was made about 500 B.C. by an explorer, presumably a Greek from Massilia, who visited Tartessus (near Gibraltar) and there gathered a few hazy ideas concerning Atlantic Europe. This writer's allusions to Britain are preserved in a doggerel poem by a late Roman writer named *Avienus*, who excerpted and versified the early geographers of the western regions. (Text I a.)

▲ About 325 B.C. a Massiliote named *Pytheas* reached Britain and perhaps circumnavigated it. His account of his travels unfortunately found little credence, and hardly anything of it has been preserved. The longest surviving fragment, a description of the Cornish tin mines, is incorporated in the *World's History* of *Diodorus Siculus*, a Greek writer of c. 50 B.C. (Text I b.)

Our next informant is *Julius Cæsar*, who fought two campaigns in Britain (55-4 B.C.). Cæsar's personal knowledge of Britain extended only to its south-eastern portion; his description of the British lands and British customs in general is at second hand, and has been proved incorrect in various details by modern archæologists. On the other hand his good faith has stood the test of severe attacks, and his account of his campaigns may be accepted as entirely trustworthy.¹ (Texts II and III.)

¹ An attempt to check Cæsar's account by a mediæval work known as 'The Chronicle of Tysilio' has been made by Sir Flinders Petrie (*Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1917; *History*, 1919). A closer examination of 'Tysilio' will show that his chronicle is but a variant of

In the age of Augustus the Greek geographer Strabo wrote a short description of Britain, whose chief value consists in its references to the emperor's methods of pacific penetration. (Text IV.)

For the opening campaigns in the definite conquest of Britain by the Romans our chief source is a Greek writer of the third century A.D. named Cassius Dio. This author was a competent historian and drew upon good informants, but in a general history of Rome such as he wrote there was no room for a detailed account of operations against minor enemies. Dio's narrative therefore is brief to the point of obscurity. (Text V.)

For the period A.D. 47-83, in which the Roman conquest was virtually completed, we have an almost unbroken account from the historian Tacitus, who lived not long after the events described by him and had a personal interest in the career of Britain's greatest governor, Julius Agricola, for Agricola was his father-in-law. His *Annals* and *Agricola* are our principal authority for Roman Britain. Not that his account satisfies the requirements of the modern historian. It is episodic rather than continuous in its record of campaigns, and its geographical details are utterly inadequate. Moreover it gives far too little information on the administration, the economic conditions and the general culture of Roman Britain. But it contains some excellent examples of Tacitus' power of graphic description, and in all his works there is little that surpasses his story of Boudicca's revolt or of the battle of Mons Graupius for vividness of detail. (Texts VI-VIII.)

For the last three hundred years of the Roman occupation our literary sources fail us almost completely, and our knowledge has to be derived from archæological materials, which

Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Britons*. (See the rejoinder by Prof. R. W. Chambers in the same number of *History*.) In any case, Tysilio's account of Cæsar's campaigns contains a great deal of manifest romance, and nothing that could not be found out by reading between Cæsar's lines.

fortunately become more abundant in each succeeding century. The authors of the second and later centuries bestow nothing more on Britain save a few passing allusions out of which a continuous history cannot be reconstructed. The only passages worth inclusion in this selection are the references made by the *Scriptores Historiæ Augustæ* (a collection of biographical writers of the fourth century) to the Northumbrian and Scottish walls, and Cassius Dio's account of the campaign of Severus in A.D. 209, which constituted the 'farthest north' record of the Roman Army. (Texts IX a-d.)

The Greek and Roman records of Britain are disappointingly meagre. But it must be remembered that until the time of Julius Cæsar or even of the definite Roman conquest in the first century A.D., Britain remained an almost unknown country 'beyond the Ocean'; and that after its inclusion in the Roman empire it was a distant and unimportant province. Therefore except at times when it became the scene of interesting military operations it could hardly be expected to attract the attention of ancient historians.

The translations of the selected texts have been derived from the following sources:—

Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, from T. Rice Holmes (Clarendon Press, 1908);

Tacitus, *Annals*, from G. G. Ramsay (Murray, 1904-9);

„ *Agricola*, from A. J. Church and G. C. Brodribb (Macmillan, 1869);

Cassius Dio, bk. lx., from E. Cary (Vol. VII: Heinemann, 1924).

Occasional omissions and abridgments have been made to suit the purpose of the present series.

The following editions and companion volumes may be recommended:—

T. Rice Holmes, *Cæsar, De Bello Gallico* (Clarendon Press, 1914).

T. Rice Holmes, *Ancient Britain and the Invasions of Julius Cæsar* (Clarendon Press, 1907).

H. Furneaux, *Tacitus, Annals XI-XVI* (revised edition by

H. F. Pelham and C. D. Fisher; Clarendon Press, 1907).

H. Furneaux, *Tacitus, Agricola* (revised and enlarged by J. G. C. Anderson; Clarendon Press, 1922).

R. G. Collingwood, *Roman Britain* (Clarendon Press, 1923).

F. J. Haverfield, *The Roman Occupation of Britain* (Clarendon Press, 1924).

I. THE DISCOVERY OF BRITAIN.

[(a) Rufus Festus Avienus, *Ora Maritima*, ls. 108-112.]

From hence¹ in two suns ships can reach
The Sacred Isle, as men once called it.²
Betwixt the waves it lies far stretched,
A roomy home for the Hibernian race.
Hard by there lies the isle of the Albiones.³

[(b) Diodorus Siculus, bk. v., ch. 22.]

At the corner of Britain which is called Belerium the natives are conspicuously friendly to strangers and through intercourse with foreign traders have adopted a civilised life. These prepare the tin by skilful mining operations in the soil which produces it. This consists of rock with loads of earthy matter, in which they quarry their way and reduce the ore by smelting. They hammer the metal into the shape of concave ingots and convey it to an island that lies off the British coast and is named Ictis;⁴ for at ebb-tide, when the intervening channel runs dry, they convey the tin in quantities to this spot on wagons.

¹ From Cape Ushant in Brittany.

² The Greeks assimilated 'Ierne' into *ἱερὴ νῆσος*, i.e. Sacred Isle.

³ This is probably a pre-Celtic name for Britain. Greek and Roman writers almost invariably used the Celtic name Britannia; but in order to make a distinction between Britain and Ireland they occasionally reverted to the name Albion.

⁴ St. Michael's Mount, near Penzance. The reasons given by Rice Holmes for this identification (*Rom. Brit.*, 499-507) have not been overthrown by Ridgeway (*Jnl. Rom. Stud.*, xiv., 136).

II. JULIUS CÆSAR'S FIRST EXPEDITION (55 B.C.).

[*De Bello Gallico*, bk. iv., chs. 20-36.]

(20) Only a small part of the summer remained, and in these parts,¹ the whole of Gaul having a northerly trend, winter sets in early: nevertheless Cæsar made active preparations for an expedition to Britain; for he knew that in almost all the operations in Gaul our enemies had been reinforced from that country.² Besides, if there were not time for a campaign, he thought that it would be well worth his while merely to visit the island, see what the people were like, and make himself acquainted with the features of the country, the harbours and the landing-places; for of all this the Gauls knew practically nothing. No one, indeed, readily undertakes the voyage to Britain except traders; and even they know nothing of it except the coast and the parts opposite the different regions of Gaul.³ Accordingly, though Cæsar summoned traders from all parts to meet him, he could not ascertain the extent of the island, what tribes dwelt therein, their strength, their method of fighting, their manners and customs, or what harbours were capable of accommodating a large flotilla.

(21) To procure information on these points before risking the attempt, he sent Gaius Volusenus, whom he considered perfectly competent, with a galley, instructing him to make a thorough reconnaissance and return as soon as possible. At the same time he marched with his whole force for the country of the Morini,⁴ as the shortest passage to Britain was from their coast, and ordered ships to assemble there from all the ports in the adjacent districts, as well as the fleet which he had built in the previous summer for the war with the

¹ I.e. the region of the Lower Rhine, where Cæsar had operated in the earlier part of 55 B.C.

² In 57-6 B.C. Cæsar had conducted campaigns along the Atlantic seaboard of Gaul.

³ This statement is confirmed by the absence of contemporaneous coins and other continental imports in the interior of Britain.

⁴ The Pas de Calais.

Veneti.¹ Meanwhile his design became known and was reported by traders to the Britons, whereupon envoys came to him from several tribes of the island, promising to give hostages and to submit to the authority of the Roman people. On hearing what they had to say, Cæsar graciously reassured them, and sent them home, enjoining them to abide by their resolve. Along with them he sent Commius, whom, after the overthrow of the Atrebatæ,² he had set up as king over that people. He instructed him to visit all the tribes he could, to urge them to trust to the good faith of the Roman people, and to announce that Cæsar would soon arrive. Volusenus reconnoitred all the features of the coast, as far as he could get the chance, for he could not venture to disembark and trust himself to the natives, and in five days returned to Cæsar and reported his observations.

(22) About eighty transports, which he considered sufficient to convey two legions,³ were collected and assembled. Besides these there were eighteen transports, eight miles off, which were prevented from making the same harbour⁴ by contrary winds: these he assigned to the cavalry.

(23) The arrangements were now complete; and taking advantage of favourable weather, he set sail about the third watch,⁵ directing the cavalry to march to the further harbour, embark there, and follow him. They were rather dilatory in getting through their work; but Cæsar with the leading ships reached Britain about the fourth hour; and there, standing in full view on all the heights,⁶ he saw an armed force of the enemy. The formation of the ground was peculiar, the sea being so closely walled in by abrupt heights that it was possible to throw a missile from the ground above on to the shore. Cæsar thought the place most unsuitable for landing,

¹ In Southern Brittany.

² In Artois.

³ A legion numbered 4000 to 5000 effectives.

⁴ Cæsar's main fleet assembled at Portus Itius (Boulogne), the usual point of departure for Britain. The eighteen transports lay further north, at Ambleuse.

⁵ About midnight.

⁶ The Dover cliffs.

and accordingly remained till the ninth hour, waiting at anchor for the other ships to join him. Getting wind and tide together in his favour, Cæsar gave the signal, weighed anchor, and sailing on about seven miles further, ran the ships aground on an open and evenly-shelving shore.¹

(24) The natives knew what the Romans intended. Sending on ahead their cavalry and charioteers—a kind of warriors whom they habitually employ in action—they followed with the rest of their force and attempted to prevent our men from disembarking. It was very difficult to land, for these reasons. The size of the ships made it impossible for them to ground except in deep water; the soldiers did not know the ground, and with their hands loaded, and weighted by their heavy, cumbrous armour, they had to jump down from the ships, keep their foothold in the surf, and fight the enemy all at once; while the enemy had all their limbs free, they knew the ground perfectly, and standing on dry land or moving forward a little into the water, they threw their missiles boldly and drove their horses into the sea, which they were trained to enter. Our men were unnerved by the situation; and having no experience of this kind of warfare, they did not show the same dash and energy that they generally did in battles on land.

(25) Cæsar, noticing this, ordered all the galleys, with the look of which the natives were not familiar, and which were easier to handle, to sheer off a little from the transports, row hard and range alongside of the enemy's flank, and slingers, archers and artillery to shoot from their decks and drive the enemy out of the way. This manœuvre was of great service to our men; for the natives, alarmed by the build of the ships, the motion of the oars, and the strangeness of the artillery, stood still, and then drew back a little. And now, as our soldiers were hesitating, chiefly because of the depth of the water, the standard-bearer of the 10th threw himself overboard, and advanced, bearing the eagle, against the enemy. Then, calling upon each other not to suffer such a

¹ Between Deal and Walmer.

disgrace, the men leaped all together from the ship. Seeing this, their comrades in the nearest ships followed them, and advanced close up to the enemy.

(26) Both sides fought with spirit ; but the Romans, being unable to keep their ranks unbroken or get firm foothold or follow their respective standards, and, as they came from this or that ship, joining any standard they met, became greatly confused ; while the enemy knew all the shallows, and when from their standpoint on shore they saw a few men disembarking one by one, urged on their horses, and, surrounding the little group in numbers, attacked them before they were ready ; others again got on the exposed flank of an entire company and plied them with missiles. Cæsar, noticing this, ordered the men-of-war's boats and also the scouts to be manned, and, whenever he saw any of his men in difficulties, sent them to the rescue. Our men, as soon as they got upon dry land, followed by all their comrades, charged the enemy and put them to flight, but could not pursue them far because the cavalry had not been able to keep their course and make the island. This was the only drawback to Cæsar's usual good fortune.

(27) The beaten enemy, on rallying after their flight, at once sent envoys to Cæsar to sue for peace, promising to give hostages and to obey his commands. The envoys were accompanied by Commius the Atrebatian, who, as I have already related, had been sent on by Cæsar to Britain in advance. He had just landed, and, in the character of an envoy, was conveying Cæsar's mandates to the Britons, when they seized him and loaded him with chains ; but now, after the battle, they sent him back, and, while suing for peace, laid the blame of the outrage upon the rabble. Cæsar complained that, after the Britons had spontaneously sent envoys to the continent and asked him for peace, they had attacked him without provocation, but said that he would pardon their ignorance, and demanded hostages. Part of the required number they handed over at once, saying that they had to fetch the rest from long distances, and would deliver them in

a few days. Meanwhile they ordered their followers to go back to their districts, while chiefs began to come in from all parts and place themselves and their tribes under Cæsar's protection.

(28) Peace had been thus established, when, three days after the expedition reached Britain, the eighteen ships mentioned above, which had taken the cavalry on board, sailed from the upper port with a light breeze. They were getting close to Britain and were seen from the camp, when such a violent storm suddenly arose that none of them could keep their course, but some were carried back to the point from which they had started, while the others were swept down in great peril to the lower and more westerly part of the island.¹ They anchored notwithstanding, but as they were becoming waterlogged, were forced to stand out to sea in the face of night and make for the continent.

(29) The same night it happened to be full moon, which generally causes very high tides in the Ocean, a fact of which our men were not aware. The result was that the galleys, in which Cæsar had brought over troops, and which he had drawn up on dry land, were waterlogged, while the transports, which were at anchor, were damaged by the storm, and the men were unable to be of any service or go to their assistance. Several ships were wrecked; the rest were rendered useless by the loss of their rigging, anchors, and other fittings; and naturally the whole army was seized by panic. There were no other ships to take them back; everything required for repairing ships was lacking, and as the troops all understood that they would have to winter in Gaul, no corn for the winter had been provided on the spot.

(30) When this became known, the British chiefs who had waited on Cæsar after the battle took counsel together. They knew that the Romans had neither cavalry nor ships nor grain; and they gathered that their troops were few from the smallness of the camp, which, as Cæsar had taken over the legions without heavy baggage, was extraordinarily contracted.

¹ Towards Romney Marsh.

They therefore concluded that their best course would be to renew hostilities, cut off our men from corn and other supplies, and protract the campaign till winter, being confident that, if they overpowered them or prevented their return, no invader would ever again come to Britain. Accordingly they renewed their oaths of mutual fidelity, and began to move away one by one from the camp and to fetch their tribesmen secretly from the districts.

(31) Cæsar was not yet aware of their plans; but from what had happened to his ships and from the fact that the chiefs had left off sending hostages, he guessed what was coming. Accordingly he prepared for all contingencies. He had corn brought in daily from the fields into camp; utilised the timber and bronze belonging to the ships that had been most severely damaged to repair the rest; and ordered everything required for the purpose to be brought over from the continent. The men worked with hearty good-will; and thus, although twelve ships were lost, he managed to have the rest made tolerably seaworthy.

(32) Meanwhile a legion, known as the 7th, was sent out in the ordinary course to fetch corn. So far no one had suspected that hostilities were brewing; for some of the natives still remained in the districts, while others were actually passing in and out of the camp; but the troops on guard in front of the gates of the camp reported to Cæsar that an unusual amount of dust was to be seen in the direction in which the legion had gone. Suspecting that the natives had hatched some scheme, Cæsar ordered the cohorts¹ on guard to accompany him in the direction indicated. He had advanced some little distance from the camp when he observed that his troops were hard pressed by the enemy and could barely hold their own, the legion being huddled together and missiles hurled in from all sides. All the corn had been cut except in this one spot; and the enemy, anticipating that the Romans would come here, had lain in wait in the woods during the night; then, when the troops had laid aside their weapons

¹ Each legion was divided into ten cohorts.

and were dispersed and busy reaping, they had suddenly fallen upon them. A few were killed ; the rest, whose ranks were not properly formed, were thrown into confusion ; and the enemy's horse and war chariots had at the same time encompassed them.

(33) Chariots are used in action in the following way. First of all the charioteers drive all over the field, the warriors hurling missiles ; and generally they throw the enemy's ranks into confusion by the mere terror inspired by their horses and the clatter of the wheels. As soon as they have penetrated between the troops of cavalry,¹ the warriors jump off the chariots and fight on foot. The drivers meanwhile gradually withdraw from the action, and range the cars in such a position, that if the warriors are hard pressed by the enemy's numbers, they may easily get back to them. Thus they exhibit in action the mobility of cavalry combined with the steadiness of infantry ; and they become so efficient from constant practice and training that they will drive their horses at full gallop, keeping them well in hand, down a steep incline, check and turn them in an instant, run along the pole, stand on the yoke, and step backwards again to the cars with the greatest nimbleness.

(34) Our men were unnerved by these movements, because the tactics were new to them ; and Cæsar came to their support in the nick of time. When he came up the enemy stood still, and our men recovered from their alarm. Thinking, however, that the moment was not favourable for challenging the enemy and forcing on a battle, he simply maintained his position, and after a short interval withdrew the legions into camp. Stormy weather followed for several days running, which kept the troops in camp and prevented the enemy from attacking. Meantime the natives sent messengers in all directions, telling their tribesmen that our troops were few, and pointing out that they had an excellent opportunity for plundering and establishing their independence for good by driving the Romans from their camp. By these representa-

¹ Their own cavalry.

tions they speedily got together a large body of horse and foot, and advanced against the camp.

(35) Cæsar foresaw that what had happened on previous days would happen again—even if the enemy were beaten, their mobility would enable them to get off scot free; however, he luckily obtained about thirty horsemen, whom the Atrebatian Commius had taken over with him, and drew up the legions in front of the camp. A battle followed; and the enemy, unable to stand long against the onset of our troops, turned and fled. The troops pursued them as far as their speed and endurance would permit, and killed a good many of them; then, after burning all the buildings far and wide, they returned to camp.

(36) On the same day the enemy sent envoys who came to Cæsar to sue for peace. He ordered them to find twice as many hostages as before and take them across to the continent; for the equinox was near, and as his ships were unsound, he did not think it wise to risk a stormy passage. Taking advantage of favourable weather, he set sail a little after midnight. All the ships reached the continent in safety.

III. JULIUS CÆSAR'S SECOND EXPEDITION (54 B.C.).

[*De Bello Gallico*, bk. v., chs. 8-23.]

(8) Cæsar, leaving Labienus on the continent with three legions and two thousand cavalry to protect the ports, provide for a supply of corn, ascertain what was passing in Gaul, and act as the circumstances of the moment might dictate, set sail towards sunset with five legions and the same number of cavalry as he had left behind. A light south-westerly breeze wafted him on his way: but about midnight the wind dropped; he failed to keep his course; and drifting far away with the tide, he descried Britain at daybreak lying behind on the port quarter. Then, following the turn of the tide, he rowed hard to gain the part of the island where, as he had learned in the preceding summer, it was best to land. The energy shown by the soldiers on this occasion was most

praiseworthy; rowing hard without a break they kept up in their heavily laden transports with the ships of war. The ships all reached Britain about midday, but no enemy was visible; large numbers, as Cæsar found out afterwards from prisoners, had assembled at the spot, but, alarmed by the great number of the ships, more than eight hundred of which, counting those of the preceding year and the private vessels which individuals had built for their own convenience, were visible at once, they had quitted the shore and withdrawn to the higher ground.

(9) Cæsar disembarked the army and chose a suitable spot for a camp. Having ascertained from prisoners where the enemy's forces were posted, he left ten cohorts and three hundred cavalry near the sea to protect the ships, and marched against the enemy about the third watch. He felt little anxiety for the ships, as he was leaving them at anchor on a nice open shore. The ships and the detachment which protected them were placed under the command of Quintus Atrius. After a night march of about twelve miles Cæsar descried the enemy's force. Advancing with their cavalry and chariots from higher ground towards a river,¹ they attempted to check our men and force on an action. Beaten off by the cavalry, they fell back into the woods and occupied a well-fortified post of great natural strength, which they had apparently prepared for defence some time before with a view to intestine war, for all the entrances were blocked by felled trees laid close together. Fighting in scattered groups, they threw missiles from the woods, and tried to prevent our men from penetrating within the defences; but the soldiers of the seventh legion, locking their shields over their heads, and piling up lumber against the defences, captured the position and drove them out of the woods at the cost of a few wounded.

(10) On the following morning he sent a light force of infantry and cavalry, in three columns, to pursue the fugitives. They had advanced a considerable distance, the rear-guard being just in sight, when some troopers from Quintus

¹ The Great Stour, near Canterbury.

Atrius came to Cæsar with the news that there had been a great storm on the preceding night, and that almost all the ships had been damaged and gone ashore, as the anchors and cables did not hold, and the seamen and their captains could not cope with the force of the storm. The collisions between different vessels had therefore caused heavy loss.

(11) On receiving this information, Cæsar recalled the legions and cavalry, ordering them to defend themselves as they marched, and went back himself to the ships. He saw with his own eyes much the same as he had learned from the messengers and the dispatch which they brought: about forty ships were lost, but it seemed possible to repair the rest, though at the cost of considerable trouble. Accordingly he selected skilled workmen from the legions and ordered others to be sent for from the continent, at the same time writing to tell Labienus to build as many ships as possible with the legions under his command. Although it involved great trouble and labour, he decided that the best plan would be to have all the ships hauled up and connected with the camp by one entrenchment. About ten days were spent in these operations, the troops not suspending work even in the night. As soon as the ships were hauled up and the camp strongly fortified, Cæsar left the same force as before to protect them, and advanced to the point from which he had returned. By the time that he had arrived reinforcements of Britons had assembled on the spot from all sides. The chief command and the general direction of the campaign had been entrusted by common consent to Cassivellaunus, whose territories are separated from those of the maritime tribes by a river called the Thames, about eighty miles¹ from the sea. He had before been incessantly at war with the other tribes; but in their alarm at our arrival the Britons had made him commander-in-chief.

(12) The interior of Britain is inhabited by a people who, according to oral tradition—so the Britons themselves

¹ The Roman mile measured about seven furlongs.

say—are aboriginal;¹ the maritime districts by immigrants who crossed over from Belgium to plunder, and attack the aborigines, almost all of whom being called after the tribes from whom the first comers were an offshoot. When the war was over they remained in the country and settled down as tillers of the soil. The population is immense:² homesteads, closely resembling those of the Gauls,³ are met with at every turn; and cattle are very numerous. Gold coins are in use,⁴ or, instead of coins, iron bars of fixed weight.⁵ Tin is found in the country in the inland,⁶ and iron in the maritime districts,⁷ but the latter only in small quantities; bronze is imported. Trees exist of all the varieties which occur in Gaul, except the beech and the fir.⁸ Hares, fowls and geese they think it impious to taste, but they keep them for pastime or amusement.⁹ The climate is more equable than in Gaul, the cold being less severe.

(13) The island is triangular in shape, one side being opposite Gaul. One corner of this side, by Kent—the landing-place for almost all ships from Gaul—has an easterly, and the lower one a southerly aspect. The extent of this side is about 500 miles. The second trends westward towards

¹ The entire population of Britain came from the continent after the Ice Age in many successive waves.

² This was only true of the dry corn-growing districts of the South and East.

³ Frame huts, like those found at Glastonbury.

⁴ The earliest British coins were imitations of Gaulish coins which in turn were modelled on Greek coins.

⁵ Specimens have been found on many sites of S. England and the Midlands.

⁶ This mistake is hard to explain. In Cæsar's time the routes to Cornwall were no longer a secret.

⁷ The Sussex Weald.

⁸ The beech is a native of England and thrives on the limestone formations of Kent. It is strange that it should have escaped Cæsar's notice. The firs of Britain, except the 'Scotch firs,' which really are pines, are modern importations.

⁹ Material remains suggest that cocks were kept for fighting, and that in some districts at least hares were eaten.

Spain :¹ off the coast here is Ireland, which is considered only half as large as Britain, though the passage is equal in length to that between Britain and Gaul. Half-way across is an island called Mona ;² and several smaller islands also are believed to be situated opposite this coast, in which, according to some writers, there is continuous night, about the winter solstice, for thirty days.³ Our enquiries could elicit no information on the subject but by accurate measurements with a water-clock we could see that the nights were shorter than on the continent.⁴ The length of this side, according to the natives, is 700 miles. The third has a northerly aspect, and no land lies opposite to it ; its corner, however, looks, if anything, in the direction of Germany. The length of this side is estimated at 800 miles. Thus the whole island is 2000 miles in circumference.

(14) By far the most civilised of all the natives are the inhabitants of Kent—a purely maritime district—whose culture does not differ much from that of the Gauls. The people of the interior do not, for the most part, cultivate grain, but live on milk and flesh-meat and clothe themselves with skins.⁵ All the Britons, without exception, stain themselves with woad, which produces a bluish tint ; and this gives them a wild look in battle. They wear their hair long, and shave the whole of their body except the head and the upper lip. Groups of ten or twelve men have wives in common, brothers generally sharing with each other and fathers with their sons ; the offsprings of these unions are

¹ This mistake recurs in Tacitus (see p. 42).

² Clearly the Isle of Man. In Tacitus 'Mona' as clearly is Anglesey (see p. 30).

³ The lands of the Arctic circle were only known to Greeks and Romans by hearsay. But they gave them a definite name, 'Thule,' and eventually equated Thule with the Orkneys or Shetlands.

⁴ A similar statement had been made by Pytheas, but had not found general credence. Tacitus (p. 36) also comments on the length of the summer days in Britain.

⁵ There is abundant evidence that corn was grown and wool was spun in the South and Midlands long before Cæsar's time.

counted as the children of the man to whose home the mother, as a virgin, was originally taken.¹

(15) The enemy's horsemen and charioteers kept up a fierce running fight with our cavalry, the latter, however, getting the best of it at all points, and driving the enemy into the woods and on to the hills: they killed a good many, but pursuing too eagerly lost some of their own number. After a time, while our men were off their guard and occupied in entrenching their camp, the enemy suddenly dashed out of the woods, swooped down upon the outpost in front of the camp, and engaged in a hot combat; and when Cæsar sent two cohorts our men were unnerved by tactics which were new to them, and they boldly charged between the two and got back unhurt. After additional cohorts had been sent up, the enemy were beaten off.

(16) Throughout this peculiar combat, which was fought in full view of every one and actually in front of the camp, it was clear that the infantry, owing to the weight of their armour, were ill fitted to engage an enemy of this kind; for they could not pursue him when he retreated, and they dared not abandon their regular formation: also that the cavalry fought at great risk, because the enemy generally fell back on purpose, and after drawing our men a little distance away from the legions, leaped down from their chariots and fought on foot with the odds in their favour. The Britons never fought in masses, but in groups separated by wide intervals; they posted reserves and relieved each other in succession, fresh vigorous men taking the places of those who were tired.

(17) Next day, Cæsar having sent three legions and all his cavalry on a foraging expedition under one of his generals, Gaius Trebonius, they suddenly swooped down from all points on the foragers, not hesitating to attack the ordered ranks of the legions. The men charged them vigorously, beat them off, and continued to pursue them until the cavalry,

¹ Polyandry may have survived to Cæsar's time among the pre-Celtic tribes.

relying upon the support of the legions, which they saw behind them, drove them headlong: they killed a great many of them and never allowed them to rally or make a stand or get down from their chariots. After this rout the reinforcements, which had assembled from all sides, immediately dispersed; and from that time the enemy never encountered us in a general action.

(18) Having ascertained the enemy's plans, Cæsar led his army to the Thames, into the territories of Cassivellaunus. The river can only be forded at one spot, and there with difficulty. On reaching this place, he observed that the enemy were drawn up in great force near the opposite bank of the river. The bank was fenced by sharp stakes planted along its edge; and similar stakes were fixed under water and concealed by the river.¹ Having learned these facts from prisoners and deserters, Cæsar sent his cavalry on in front, and ordered the legions to follow them speedily; but the men advanced with such swiftness and dash, though they only had their heads above water, that the enemy, unable to withstand the combined onset of infantry and cavalry, quitted the bank and fled.

(19) Cassivellaunus, abandoning, as we have remarked above, all thoughts of regular combat, disbanded the greater part of his force, retaining only about four thousand charioteers; watched our line of march; and moving a little away from the track, concealed himself in impenetrable wooded spots, and removed the cattle and inhabitants from the open country into the woods in those districts through which he had learned that we intended to march. Whenever our cavalry made a bold dash into the country to plunder and devastate, he sent his charioteers out of the woods (for he was familiar with every track and path), engaged the cavalry to their great peril, and by the fear which he thus inspired prevented them from moving far afield. Cæsar had now no

¹Submerged stakes of oak have been found at Brentford. It is not impossible that these were fixed by Cassivellaunus. But no certainty exists as to the point of Cæsar's crossing.

choice but to forbid them to move out of touch with the column of infantry, and by ravaging the country and burning villages, to injure the enemy as far as the legionaries' powers of endurance would allow.

(20) Meanwhile the Trinovantes—about the strongest tribe in that part of the country¹—sent envoys to Cæsar promising to surrender and obey his commands. Mandubracius, a young chief of this tribe, whose father had been their king and had been put to death by Cassivellaunus, but who had saved his own life by flight, had gone to the continent to join Cæsar, and thrown himself upon his protection. The Trinovantes begged Cæsar to protect Mandubracius from harm at the hands of Cassivellaunus, and to send him to rule over his own people with full powers. Cæsar sent Mandubracius, but ordered them to furnish forty hostages and grain for his army. They promptly obeyed his commands, sending hostages to the number required and also the grain.

(21) As the Trinovantes had been granted protection and immunity from all injury on the part of the soldiers, the Cenimagni, Segontiaci, Ancalites, Bibroci and Cassi² sent embassies to Cæsar and surrendered. He learned from the envoys that the stronghold of Cassivellaunus,³ which was protected by woods and marshes, was not far off, and that a considerable number of men and of cattle had assembled in it. The Britons apply the name of stronghold to any woodland spot, difficult of access and fortified with a rampart and trench, to which they are in the habit of resorting in order to escape a hostile raid. Cæsar marched to the spot indicated with his legions, and found that the place was of great natural strength and well fortified; nevertheless he proceeded to assault it on two sides. The enemy stood their ground a short time, but could not sustain the onset of our infantry, and fled precipitately from another part of the stronghold. A

¹ The Trinovantes had their seat in Essex.

² The Cenimagni are probably to be identified with the Iceni of East Anglia. The location of the other tribes is uncertain.

³ Probably St. Albans.

great quantity of cattle was found in the place, and many of the garrison were captured as they were trying to escape, and killed.

(22) While the operations above mentioned were going on in this district, Cassivellaunus sent envoys to Kent, which, as we have remarked above, is close to the sea, ordering the kings who ruled over the country, to collect all their forces, make a sudden descent upon the naval camp, and attack it. When they reached the camp the officers made a sortie, killed many of them, captured their leader Lugotorix, a man of rank, and withdrew their men without loss. On receiving news of the action Cassivellaunus, who was greatly alarmed by the defection of the tribes, following the numerous disasters which he had sustained and the ravaging of his country, availed himself of the mediation of the Atrebatian Commius, and sent envoys to Cæsar to propose surrender. Cæsar had resolved to winter on the continent, because disturbances were likely to break out suddenly in Gaul: not much of the summer remained, and the enemy, as he knew, could easily spin out the time. Accordingly he ordered hostages to be given, and fixed the tribute which Britain was to pay annually to the Roman people, at the same time strictly forbidding Cassivellaunus to molest Mandubracius or the Trinovantes.

(23) On receiving the hostages, he led back the army to the sea, where he found the ships repaired. When they were launched, he arranged to take the army back in two trips, as he had a large number of prisoners and some ships had been destroyed by the storm. It so happened that of all this numerous fleet, after so many voyages, not a single vessel conveying troops was lost either in this or the preceding year; while of the ships that were empty only a very few reached their destination, nearly all the rest being driven back. Cæsar waited for them a considerable time in vain; and then, for fear the lateness of the season (just before the equinox) should prevent his sailing, he was obliged to pack the troops rather closely. A dead calm followed, and unmooring at the beginning of the second watch, he reached land at dawn and brought all the ships safe ashore.

IV. BRITAIN IN THE DAYS OF AUGUSTUS.

[Strabo, bk. iv., ch. 5, §§ 2-4 ; pp. 199-201.]

There are four crossing places which are in common use between the island and the continent, namely from the river mouths, the Rhine, Seine, Loire and Garonne. Those who make the trip from Rhineland do not put out to sea right at the river estuary, but from the land of the Morini, where lies Portus Itius, the naval station of the divine Cæsar. The greater part of the island is level and wooded, with expanses of rolling country. It produces corn, cattle, gold,¹ silver¹ and iron. All these are exported ; also hides, slaves, and dogs suitable for the chase.² The men are taller than the Gauls and less fair-haired, but looser in texture. Here is proof of their size : at Rome we saw striplings half a foot higher than the tallest men there, but bandy-legged and clumsily built. Their customs resemble those of the Gauls, but are simpler and more primitive : some who have milk in plenty do not make cheese for lack of knowledge, and they are unversed in plantation and other husbandry. Their government is monarchical. In war they mostly use chariots, like some of the Gauls. They make their strongholds in forest thickets, where they fence off a wide ring with logs and build their huts and stall their cattle for a season. The sky is rainy rather than laden with snow ; in the open air the mists persist, so that during entire days the sun may only appear for three or four hours at noontide.

At present some of the chieftains have secured the friendship of Cæsar Augustus by means of embassies and marks of deference ;³ they have set up offerings on the Capitol and have more or less opened up the entire island to Roman influence. They will no wise submit to heavy duties on

¹ Gold and silver were mined in small quantities. These mines, and the pearl fisheries, were the source of many hopeful rumours.

² These apparently were not hounds, but large bull-dogs.

³ Augustus himself says that he received two British chiefs as suppliants (*Monumentum Ancyranum*, ch. 32).

the merchandise exported to Gaul and imported thence (this consists of ivory armlets, necklaces, spangles, glass ware and other such trash), so that the island does not require a garrison. It would need at least one legion and some cavalry to collect taxes from them, and the expense on the army would balance the revenue accruing.

There are also some small islands round Britain, and one large island, Ierne, extending to the north of Britain¹ and having greater length than breadth. We have nothing certain to tell about it, save that its inhabitants are wilder than the Britons, for they are cannibals and gluttons, and think it meritorious to eat their dead parents, and they have open intercourse, even with their mothers and sisters. But these statements do not rest on trustworthy evidence.²

V. THE CAMPAIGNS OF PLAUTIUS (A.D. 43 *sqq.*).

[Cassius Dio, bk. lx., chs. 19-22.]

(19) While these events were happening in the city,³ Aulus Plautius, a senator of great renown, made a campaign against Britain; for a certain Bericus,⁴ who had been driven out of the island as the result of an uprising, had persuaded Claudius to send a force thither. Thus Plautius received this command; but he had difficulty in inducing his army to advance beyond Gaul. For the soldiers were indignant at the thought of carrying on a campaign outside the limits of the then known world,⁵ and would not yield him obedience until Narcissus, who had been sent out by Claudius, mounted the tribunal of Plautius and attempted to address them. Then they became much angrier and would not allow Narcissus to say a word, but suddenly shouted with one accord the well-known cry

¹ This error of Strabo's arose from his idea that the Atlantic coast of Europe ran east and west.

² They are the first recorded injustice to Ireland.

³ A.D. 43.

⁴ Nothing further is known about this personage.

⁵ After his campaign in Britain, Claudius boasted in and out of season that 'he had extended the bounds of empire beyond Ocean.'

'Io Saturnalia' (for at the festival of Saturn the slaves don their masters' dress and hold festival)¹ and at once willingly followed Plautius. Their delay, however, had made their departure late in the season. They were sent over in three divisions, in order that they should not be hindered in landing—as might happen to a single force,—and in their voyage across they first became discouraged because they were driven back in their course, and then plucked up courage because a flash of light rising in the east shot across to the west, the direction in which they were sailing. So they put in to the island and found none to oppose them. For the Britons as the result of their enquiries had not expected that they would come, and had therefore not assembled beforehand. And when they did assemble, they would not come to close quarters with the Romans, but took refuge in the swamps and the forests, hoping to wear out the invaders, so that, as in the days of Julius Cæsar, they should sail back with nothing accomplished.

(20) Plautius accordingly had much trouble in searching them out; but when at last he did find them, he first defeated Caratacus and then Togodumnus, the sons of Cunobelinus, who was dead.² After the flight of these kings he gained by capitulation a part of the Boduni, who were ruled by a tribe of the Catuellani;³ and leaving a garrison there, he advanced farther and came to a river.⁴ The barbarians thought that the Romans would not be able to cross without a bridge, and consequently bivouacked in rather careless fashion on the opposite bank; but he sent across a detachment of Germans, who were accustomed to swim easily in full armour across the most turbulent streams. These fell

¹ Narcissus had formerly been a slave of Claudius.

² Cunobelinus was the overlord of an extensive dominion in S.E. England. His capital was at Colchester.

³ The Catuellani had their seat in Hertfordshire, the Boduni perhaps in Sussex. The latter should be held distinct from the Dobuni of Gloucestershire.

⁴ The Medway. The points of departure and arrival of Plautius' fleets are unknown.

unexpectedly upon the enemy, but instead of shooting at the men they disabled the horses that drew the chariots, and in the ensuing confusion not even the enemy's mounted men could save themselves. Plautius thereupon sent across Flavius Vespasianus (the man who afterwards became emperor) and his brother Sabinus, who was acting as his lieutenant. So they too got across the river in some way and killed many of the foe, taking them by surprise. The survivors, however, did not take to flight, but on the next day joined issue again. The struggle was indecisive until Gnaeus Hosidius Geta, after narrowly missing capture, finally managed to defeat the barbarians so soundly that he received the insignia of a triumph.¹ Thence the Britons retired to the river Thames near the point where it empties into the ocean and at floodtime forms a lake. This they easily crossed because they knew accurately the firm ground and easy passages in this region; but the Romans in attempting to follow were less successful. However, the Germans swam across again and some others got over by a bridge a little way up stream,² after which they assailed the barbarians from several sides at once and cut down many of them. In pursuing the remainder incautiously, they got into swamps which offered no way out, and so lost a number of men.

(21) Shortly afterwards Togodumnus perished, but the Britons, far from yielding, united the more firmly to avenge him. Plautius now took fright and instead of advancing further proceeded to guard what he had won and sent for Claudius. For he had been instructed to do this in case he met with a very stubborn resistance, and extensive equipment, including elephants, had already been got together for the expedition.

When the message reached him Claudius came to the

¹ Only members of the imperial family were accorded the right of an actual triumph.

² The site of this bridge is uncertain. London Bridge was probably not built before the Roman conquest.

ocean and crossed over to Britain, where he joined the legions that were waiting for him near the Thames. Taking over the command of these, he crossed the stream, and engaging the barbarians, who had gathered at his approach, he defeated them in battle and captured Camulodunum,¹ the capital of Cunobelinus. Thereupon he won over numerous tribes, in some cases by capitulation, in others by force, and was saluted 'imperator' several times.² He deprived the conquered of their arms and handed them to Plautius, bidding him also to subdue the remaining districts.³ The senate on learning of his achievement gave him the title 'Britannicus' and granted him permission to celebrate a triumph.

VI. THE CAMPAIGNS OF OSTORIUS (A.D. 47 *sqq.*).

[Tacitus, *Annals*, bk. xii., chs. 31-40.]

(31) In Britain the propraetor⁴ Ostorius arrived to find a disturbed state of affairs. In the expectation that a new general with a strange army and at the beginning of winter⁵ would not dare to meet them, the enemy had made a furious inroad into the territory of our allies. But Ostorius, knowing well that it is by the first results that feelings of confidence or alarm are engendered, hurried up his light cohorts, slaughtered such as resisted, and followed up dispersed forces of the enemy; then to prevent their gathering again, and for fear that an armed and treacherous peace should leave no rest either to himself or to his army, he proceeded

¹ Colchester. The site of the previous battle is uncertain.

² 'Imperator' is here an honorary title, which the soldiers of a victorious general conferred by acclamation.

³ In A.D. 47, at the expiry of Plautius' governorship, the Roman sphere of influence probably extended from the Mendips to the Wash or the Humber.

⁴ This title was generally applied to the governors of the larger military provinces under the Roman emperors.

⁵ Towards the end of A.D. 47.

to disarm the suspected tribes and establish forts between the Trent and the Severn.¹

The first to rebel against this measure were the Iceni,² a powerful nation which, having sought our alliance voluntarily, had not yet been crushed in battle. Under their leadership the tribes round about chose a battlefield in a spot protected by a rude embankment, and with an approach so narrow as to leave no access for cavalry. The Roman general at once prepared to force his way through this rampart, though his force consisted only of allies, unsupported by legionaries; and having distributed his cohorts and equipped his horsemen also to fight on foot, he gave the signal to attack. Our men broke through the embankment and overpowered the enemy, who found themselves entangled in their own defences. Conscious of their disloyalty, and finding their escape barred, they behaved with great gallantry. In this battle Marcus Ostorius, son of the governor, gained the distinction of saving a citizen's life.

(32) The defeat of the Iceni quieted down the tribes that were wavering between peace and war, and the army was then led against the Decangi.³ Their territory was wasted, and much booty was driven off, the enemy not venturing on open battle; and if they attempted to ambush our columns, their trickery met its chastisement. Our army was now nearing the sea which confronts the island of Hibernia, when the general had to turn back in consequence of an outbreak among the Brigantes,⁴ for he was determined not to enter upon new ventures until he had secured his former conquests.

¹ I here adopt the reading *cunctaque castris [cis Tris] antonam et Sabrinam fluvios cohibere parat*. If the Romans in A.D. 47 already held the line of the Fosse Way, as is suggested by excavations at Margidunum near Nottingham, Ostorius' blockhouses extended over the N. and W. Midlands. Others read *Avonam* (i.e. the Stratford Avon) instead of *Trisantonam*. The problem is not likely to be solved except by further excavation.

² In Norfolk and Suffolk. It was the attempted disarmament, not the establishment of forts, which roused the Iceni to arms.

³ Along the N. Welsh border.

⁴ Between the Trent and the Tyne.

The Brigantes settled down as soon as the few who had taken up arms were slain; the rest were pardoned. But neither severity nor kindness could keep the Silures¹ from carrying on the war. A legionary camp had to be established to keep them down;² and to secure the desired end more quickly, a powerful colony of veterans was settled upon conquered territory at Camulodunum,³ both as a defence against rebellion, and to make our allies familiar with the rule of law.

(33) Then the Silures were attacked. Besides their own high courage, they put their trust in Caratacus, whose many battles, some doubtful, some victorious, had raised him to a pre-eminence among the princes of Britain.⁴ Inferior in numbers, but superior in cunning and in knowledge of the country, he shifted the war to the country of the Ordovices;⁵ and having gathered to himself all who dreaded the peace of Rome, he staked everything upon one battle, choosing a site where approaches, exits, and everything else were disadvantageous for us and favourable for his own men. On the one side was a steep hill; on the parts where the access was more easy, he built up a kind of rampart with stones; in front ran a river of varying depth.⁶ The defences were lined with swarms of well-armed men.

(35) The Roman general scanned anxiously the river in front, the added rampart, the heights¹ above: all formidable, all bristling with defenders. But the soldiers clamoured for

¹ In S. Wales.

² Either at Gloucester, or, more probably, at Caerleon-upon-Usk (cf. ch. 38).

³ Colchester. Excavations have shown that part at least of Colchester was rebuilt on the rectangular plan of a Roman colony after A.D. 50.

Tacitus appears to locate Camulodunum near the land of the Silures. His geography more often than not is hazy.

⁴ For his previous battles against the Romans, see pp. 23-4.

⁵ In North and Central Wales. The establishment of a large camp about A.D. 50 at Wroxeter near Shrewsbury may be brought into connection with this campaign.

⁶ Probably the Severn or the Dee, but the site of the battle is uncertain.

battle, shouting that valour could carry all before it ; while the prefects¹ and the tribunes, haranguing in the same key, still further inflamed their ardour. Then Ostorius, having studied at what points the defences could or could not be penetrated, put himself at the head of his eager troops, and passed the river without difficulty. On reaching the rampart, so long as it was an affair of missiles, our men suffered most, and many of them were killed ; but when under cover of their locked shields they had torn down the rude and ill-compacted structure of stones, and it came to fair hand-to-hand fighting, the barbarians withdrew to the heights above. But here too our soldiers, light-armed and heavy, followed them up : the former assailing them with javelins, the latter charging in close order, and thus throwing into disorder the ranks of the British, who had neither helmets nor breastplates to protect them. If they faced the auxiliaries, they were felled by the swords and throwing-spears of the legionaries ; if they turned against the latter, they were cut down by the broadswords and spears of the auxiliaries. It was a notable victory ; the wife, daughter and brothers of Caratacus were captured and made submission.

(36) Caratacus was to discover that there is no safety for the unfortunate. Throwing himself upon the mercy of Cartimandua, queen of the Brigantes, he was bound and handed over to the conquerors, in the ninth year after the beginning of the war in Britain.² His fame had travelled far beyond those islands ; it had reached the adjoining provinces, and even spread through Italy. People longed to see what man it was that for so many years had defied the power of Rome. His name was great in Rome itself ; and Cæsar,³ in exalting his own glory, enhanced that of his fallen foe. The people were summoned as if for some great spectacle ; the prætorians⁴ were drawn up in arms on the parade-ground in front of their camp. The royal clients were led along in

¹ Commanders of the non-legionary troops.

² A.D. 51.

³ I.e. Claudius, in whose reign 'Cæsar' became a title of office.

⁴ The soldiers of the Guard.

procession, together with the discs, necklaces and other decorations which the king had won in foreign wars; then came his brothers, his wife and daughter; and last of all Caratacus himself. The others dishonoured themselves by craven supplications, but not so Caratacus, who abated nothing of his high looks and made no appeal for mercy.

(37) The insignia of a triumph were voted to Ostorius; but after this his fortunes, hitherto so prosperous, began to waver: whether it was that the removal of Caratacus led to carelessness in our military operations, as though the war was over, or that compassion for their great king's fate had whetted the enemy's appetite for vengeance. They surrounded the commander of the camp, with the legionary cohorts which had been left behind to construct defences in the Silurian country; and had not help been quickly sent up to the besieged men from the neighbouring forts on receipt of the news, they would have been cut off to a man. As it was, the commander himself was killed, together with eight centurions and the bravest of the private soldiers.

(38) Then began a series of skirmishes fought mostly in guerrilla fashion, in woods or morasses, as chance or each man's courage might direct. The most stubborn resistance was that offered by the Silures, whose wrath had been kindled by a reported speech of the Roman general, that the Silurian name should be blotted out now. Thus two auxiliary cohorts, which through the cupidity of their commanders had been incautiously sent out for plundering purposes, were cut off; and the other tribes were being tempted to desert by presents of spoils and captives when at last, worn out by anxiety, Ostorius died.

(39) On hearing of the governor's death, Claudius appointed Aulus Didius in his place.¹ Though journeying with all speed, Didius found matters still worse on his arrival, owing to the defeat of the legion under Manlius Valens. This mishap also was the work of the Silurians, who scoured the country far and wide till Didius drove them back.

¹ Governor from A.D. 52 to 57.

After the capture of Caratacus the ablest British leader was Venutius, of the Brigantine tribe. This prince remained true to Rome, under the protection of a Roman force, so long as his queen Cartimandua held by him ; but when a divorce, followed by war, took place between them, he declared hostility against us also. At first the fighting was entirely between themselves. But our people eventually sent up some cohorts to the queen's aid ; a sharp engagement which ensued was at first doubtful, but ended in our favour. A battle with a similar result was fought by the legion under Cæsius Nasica ; for Didius himself, being old and sluggish and surfeited with honours, was content to act on the defensive and to leave everything to others.

VII. THE REVOLT OF BOUDICCA.¹

[Tacitus, *Annals*, bk. xiv., chs. 29-39.]

(29) In this year ² a severe disaster was sustained in Britain. The governor Didius had done no more than hold his own. His successor Veranius ³ had conducted some petty plundering expeditions against the Silures ; but all other operations were cut short by his death. The present governor was Paulinus Suetonius, an experienced soldier : popular talk, which suffers no man to be without a rival, pronounced him to be jealous of Corbulo, and eager to achieve a conquest as glorious as the recovery of Armenia.⁴ He therefore prepared to attack the populous island of Mona,⁵ which had become a refuge for fugitives, and built a fleet of flat-bottomed vessels suited for those shallow and shifting seas. The infantry crossed in the boats, the cavalry went over by fords : where the water was too deep the men swam alongside of their horses.

¹ The form ' Boadicea ' has resulted from a copyist's mistake.

² A.D. 61.

³ A.D. 57-8.

⁴ This general had made a sensational march through Armenia in A.D. 58.

⁵ Here clearly = Anglesey. The transference of the Roman base from Wroxeter to Chester was no doubt due to Suetonius.

(30) The enemy lined the shore: a dense host of armed men, interspersed with women clothed in black, like the Furies, with their hair hanging down, and holding torches in their hands. Round these were the Druids, uttering dire curses, and stretching their hands towards heaven. These strange sights terrified our soldiers. They stood motionless, as if paralysed, offering their bodies to the blows. At last, encouraged by the general, and exhorting each other not to quail before a rabble of female fanatics, they advanced their standards, bore down all resistance, and enveloped the enemy in their own flames. Suetonius imposed a garrison upon the conquered, and cut down the groves devoted to their cruel superstitions: for it was part of their religion to spill the blood of captives on their altars, and to enquire of the gods by means of human entrails.

(31) But while Suetonius was thus employed, he received news of a sudden revolt in the province. Prasutagus, king of the Iceni, after a long and prosperous reign, had appointed Cæsar¹ his heir along with his own two daughters, hoping by such an act of submission to save his kingdom and family from molestation. But things turned out differently. His kingdom was plundered by centurions, and his private property by slaves, as if they had been captured in war; his widow Boudicca was flogged, and his daughters outraged; the chiefs of the Iceni were robbed of their ancestral properties as if the Romans had received the whole country as a gift, and the king's own relatives were reduced to slavery.

Stung by these insults, and fearing worse to come, now that their country had been formed into a province, the people flew to arms, carrying with them the Trinovantes and other tribes who not yet having been tamed by slavery had conspired to recover their freedom. Their anger was hottest against the veterans recently settled at Camulodunum, who were ejecting the inhabitants from their homes, and driving them from their lands; in which high-handed proceedings they were encouraged by the soldiers, who looked forward to

¹ I.e. Nero.

a similar license for themselves. Besides all this, the temple put up to the deified Claudius was regarded as a stronghold of ascendancy for all time; while those chosen to be priests¹ had to waste their fortune under pretence of religious service. And it appeared no difficult thing to destroy an unwall'd colony; for our generals, having an eye to amenity rather than utility, had made little preparation for defence.

(32) Just at this time, from no ostensible cause, the statue of Victory at Camulodunum fell down, with its back turned, as if flying from the enemy. Frenzied women sang of coming destruction: outlandish cries had been heard in the Council-chamber,² and weird howlings in the theatre: an image of the colony in ruins had been seen in the estuary of the Thames; a blood-red ocean, and impressions of human bodies left by the receding tide, were interpreted as hopeful signs for the Britons.

Suetonius being far away, the colonists appealed for help to Catus Decianus the procurator,³ who sent them barely 200 ill-armed men, with a sprinkling of regular soldiers. For defence they relied upon the temple; but as their plans were thwarted by secret accomplices they dug no trenches and erected no palisades; they omitted to send the old men and the women away; and having taken no more precautions than if in a time of profound peace, they were surrounded by a multitude of barbarians.

Everything except the temple, in which the garrison had collected, was carried by assault or burnt; and the temple itself was stormed after a siege of two days. The victorious Britons went out to meet Petilius Cerialis, commander of the ninth legion, who was advancing to the rescue.⁴ They routed the legion and slaughtered all his infantry; Cerialis himself escaped with the cavalry and found shelter in his camp. Alarmed by this disaster, and by the animosity of the province,

¹ Usually native nobles.

² Where the senate of the colony met.

³ A financial official. We do not know his station: possibly London.

⁴ From Lincoln.

which had been goaded into war by his exactions, Catus crossed hurriedly over to Gaul.

(33) Meanwhile Suetonius, undaunted, made his way through a hostile country to Londinium,¹ a town which, though not dignified by the title of colony, was a busy emporium for traders. For a while he hesitated to make his stand at that place; but having regard to his own weakness in numbers, and the clear proofs that Petilius had owed his defeat to rashness, he resolved to save the province as a whole by the sacrifice of the city. Unmoved by the entreaties of the inhabitants, he gave the signal to march, receiving within his lines all that would come with him; those who remained behind through weakness of sex or age, or from attachment to the place, were massacred by the enemy.

A like destruction befel Verulamium; for as the barbarians revelled in plunder and were disinclined to effort, they passed by forts and military stations and fell upon places rich in spoil which had no garrisons. No less than 70,000 citizens and allies were slain in the above-mentioned places.² For the barbarians would have no capturing, no selling, nor any kind of traffic usual in war; they would have nothing but killing, by sword, cross, gibbet or fire.

(34) And now Suetonius, having with him the 14th legion, with the veterans of the 20th, and the auxiliaries nearest at hand, making up a force of about 10,000 fully armed men, resolved to prepare for battle. Selecting a position in a defile closed in behind a wood, and having made sure that there was no enemy but in front, where there was an open flat unsuited for ambuscades,³ he drew up his legions in close

¹ This is the first mention of London in literature. Some sparse Celtic remains and fragments of Gallic or Italian pottery are the only previous evidence of its existence.

² These numbers are almost certainly exaggerated. London in Suetonius' time probably did not cover more than half of the present City, say 200 acres, and can hardly have contained over 30,000 inhabitants.

³ The battle has been located by a recent writer on Hampstead Heath, between the Spaniard's Inn and the Happy Valley. It is safer to say that it was fought somewhere in England.

order, with the light armed troops on the flanks, while the cavalry was massed at the extremities of the wings. The British host came wildly on, in masses of horse and foot, and in numbers greater than ever: so full of confidence were they that they had brought their wives with them to witness their victory, mounting them on waggons drawn up all around the field of battle.

(37) The legion at first held its ground without moving; but when the enemy came near enough, and our men with sure aim had expended on them their javelins, they dashed forward in wedge-formation. The auxiliaries charged no less vigorously; while the cavalry, with spears couched, broke through all serious resistance. The rest fled as best they could, the outlets being blocked by the ring of waggons. Our men gave no quarter, even to the women.

It was a glorious victory, fit to rank with those of olden days. Some say that nearly 80,000 Britons fell, our own killed being about 400, with a somewhat larger number wounded.¹ Boudicca poisoned herself. Poenius Postumus, camp commander of the 2nd legion,² on hearing of the good fortune of the 14th and 20th, ran himself through with his sword—having not only broken the rules of the service by disobeying his general, but deprived his legion of its share in the victory.

(38) The whole army was now concentrated and kept under tents to finish the war. Nero sent reinforcements over from Germany consisting of 2000 legionaries, eight cohorts of auxiliaries, 1000 cavalry. All hostile and doubtful tribes were harried with fire and sword. But what distressed the enemy most was want of food; for as they had destined our supplies for themselves, and brought every available man into the field, they had left their own lands unsown.

Yet these wild tribes were but little inclined to peace; and all the less so as Julius Classicianus, the successor of Catus, was on bad terms with Suetonius. He gave out that it would be well to wait for a new governor, free from feelings of hos-

¹ This is nonsense.

² At Caerleon.

tility or triumph, who would deal gently with our conquered enemies. And he kept writing to Rome that no end to the war need be looked for till Suetonius was superseded : his reverses were due to his own folly, his successes to good fortune.

(39) Nero accordingly despatched Polyclitus, one of his freedmen, to look into the state of affairs in Britain, hoping that his influence might not only restore harmony between governor and procurator but also calm down the turbulent spirits of the barbarians. Travelling with an immense retinue, Polyclitus made himself a terror to our soldiers. But the enemy regarded him with contempt, for those ardent lovers of liberty had not yet learnt to understand how power could be wielded by the freedman.

All this, however, was toned down in the reports transmitted to the emperor. Suetonius was debarred from active operations, but as he happened to lose a few ships, with their crews, upon the coast, this was held to be an act of war, and he was ordered to hand over the army to Petronius Turpilianus, who had just vacated the consulship. Neither attacking nor attacked, this general dignified an inglorious inactivity with the name of peace.

VIII. THE CAMPAIGNS OF AGRICOLA (A.D. 77-83).

[Tacitus, *Agricola*, chs. 11-39.]

(11) Who were the original inhabitants of Britain, whether they were indigenous or foreign, is, as usual among barbarians, little known. Their physical characteristics are various, and from these conclusions may be drawn. The red hair and large limbs of the inhabitants of Caledonia point clearly to a German origin.¹ The dark complexion of the Silures, their usually curly hair, and the fact that Spain lies opposite to them, are an evidence that Iberians of a former date crossed over and occupied these parts.² Those who are nearest to the

¹ Red hair was an attribute both of Germans and of Celts, according to Greek and Roman authors.

² A Mediterranean immigration into Britain in neolithic times has been generally accepted by modern anthropologists.

Gauls are also like them, either from the permanent influence of original descent, or because climate has produced similar qualities; but on general grounds I believe that the Gauls established themselves in the neighbouring island.¹ Their religious belief may be traced in the strongly-marked British superstition.² The language differs but little; there is the same boldness in challenging danger, and when it is near, the same timidity in shrinking from it. The Britons, however, exhibit more spirit, as being a people whom a long peace has not yet enervated. Effeminacy has also fallen upon the long conquered tribes of Britain; the rest are still what the Gauls once were.

(12) Their strength is in infantry. Some tribes fight also with the chariot. The higher in rank is the charioteer: the fighting is left to the dependants. They were once ruled by kings, but are now divided under chieftains into factions and parties. Our greatest advantage in coping with tribes so powerful is that they do not act in concert.

Their sky is obscured by continual rain and cloud. Severity of cold is unknown. The days exceed in length those of our world; the nights are bright, and in the extreme north so short that between sunlight and dawn you can perceive but a slight distinction. It is said that if there are no clouds in the way the shining sun can be seen throughout the night. The truth is that the low shadow from the flat extremities of the earth's surface does not raise the darkness to any height, and the night thus fails to reach the sky and stars.³

With the exception of the olive and vine, and plants which usually grow in warmer climates, the soil will yield all ordinary produce in plenty. It ripens slowly, but grows rapidly, the cause in each case being the same, the excessive moisture of soil and atmosphere. Britain contains gold and silver and

¹ The Celtic invasions are supposed to have begun c. 600 B.C.

² Druidism. This was probably a pre-Celtic religion.

³ This explanation assumes that the earth is a disc under which the sun passes by night. Yet the sphericity of the earth had already been proved by the time of Aristotle.

other metals, as the prize of conquest. The ocean, too, produces pearls, but of a dusky and bluish hue. Some think that those who collect them have not the requisite skill: I would rather believe that the natural properties of the pearls are at fault than our keenness for gain.

(13) The Britons themselves bear cheerfully the conscriptions, taxes and other burdens of our dominions, if there be no oppression. Of this they are impatient: they are reduced to subjection, not as yet to slavery. The deified Julius, the first of all Romans to enter Britain with an army, though by a successful battle he struck terror into the natives and gained possession of the coast, must be regarded as having indicated rather than transmitted the acquisition to future generations. Then came the civil wars, and even in peace time Britain was long forgotten. Augustus spoke of this as policy,¹ Tiberius as tradition. That Caius Cæsar meditated an invasion of Britain is well known, but his plans were conceived in haste and soon thrown aside.² Claudius was the first to renew the attempt, and drafted into the island some legions and auxiliaries, choosing Vespasian to share in the campaign and thus starting him on his prosperous career. Several tribes were subdued and kings made prisoners, and Vespasian was made known to destiny.

(16) (After the rebellion of Boudicca) Petronius Turpilianus³ was sent out to initiate a milder rule. A stranger to the enemy's misdeeds and so more accessible to their penitence, he put an end to old troubles, and attempting nothing more, handed over the province to Trebellius Maximus.⁴ Trebellius, who was somewhat indolent and never ventured on a campaign, controlled the province by a certain courtesy in his administration. Even the barbarians now learnt to excuse many attractive vices, and the

¹ Popular opinion urged upon Augustus the conquest of Britain. The reasons for Augustus' refusal may be gathered from the passage of Strabo on p. 21-2.

² Caligula's 'retreat from Boulogne' became a standing joke among ancient writers.

³ A.D. 61-63.

⁴ A.D. 63-69.

occurrence of the civil war¹ gave a good pretext for inaction. But we were sorely troubled with mutiny, as troops habituated to service grew demoralised by idleness. Trebellius, who had escaped the soldiers' fury by flying and hiding himself, governed henceforth on sufferance. Nor did Vettius Bolanus,² during the continuance of the civil wars, trouble Britain with discipline. There was the same inaction with regard to the enemy, and similar unruliness in camp.

(17) But when Vespasian had regained Britain with the rest of the world, leaders of genius and armies of excellent quality shattered the enemy's hopes. They were struck with terror by Petilius Cerialis'³ prompt attack upon the state of the Brigantes, supposed to be the most populous in the province. There were many battles, some by no means bloodless, and his conquests, or at least his wars, embraced a large part of the territory of the Brigantes.⁴ Indeed he would have altogether thrown into the shade the activity and renown of any other successor; but Julius Frontinus⁵ was equal to the burden, a great man as far as greatness was then possible, who subdued by arms the powerful and warlike tribe of the Silures.

(18) Such was the state of Britain which Agricola found on his crossing over about midsummer.⁶ Our soldiers made it a pretext for carelessness, as if all fighting was over, and the enemy seized their chance. The Ordovices shortly before had destroyed nearly a whole squadron of allied cavalry quartered among them. This fresh move raised the country's hopes and all who wished for war watched the new governor's temper. Meanwhile Agricola, though summer was past and the detachments were scattered throughout the province,

¹ A.D. 68-69.

² A.D. 69-71.

³ Petilius had commanded a division during the revolt of Boudicca (see p. 32). He was governor from A.D. 71 to 74.

⁴ To Cerialis we may perhaps attribute the transference of the Roman base from Lincoln to York and the establishment of a line of forts between York and Chester, including Manchester.

⁵ A.D. 74-77.

⁶ A.D. 77.

though the soldiers' anticipation of inaction for that year would delay and impede a resumption of war, and most of his advisers thought it best simply to watch weak points, resolved to meet the peril. He collected a force of veterans and a small body of auxiliaries; then, as the Ordovices would not descend into the plain, he put himself in front of the ranks and led his troops up the hill. The tribe was all but exterminated.¹

Well aware that he must follow up the prestige of his arms, he formed the design of subjugating the island of Mona, from the occupation of which Suetonius had been recalled.² He had not given himself time to collect a fleet, but the skill and resolution of the general accomplished the passage. With some picked auxiliaries, disencumbered of all baggage, who knew the shallows and had that national experience of swimming which enables Britons to take care not only of themselves but of arms and horses, he delivered so unexpected an onset that the astonished enemy who were expecting an attack by a fleet, thought that to such assailants nothing could be formidable or invincible. And so, having secured peace and the surrender of the island, Agricola became great and famous for choosing toil and danger on entering his province—a time which others spend in display and a round of ceremonies.

(19) Next, with thorough insight into the feelings of his province, and taught also by the experience of others, that little is gained by conquest if followed by oppression, he determined to root out the causes of war. Beginning with himself and his retinue, he kept his household under restraint, a thing as hard to many as ruling a province. He transacted no public business through freedmen or slaves; no private predilections, no recommendations or petitions influenced him in selecting centurions and soldiers, but it was the best man who received his trust. He lightened the exaction of

¹ Obviously an exaggeration. The site of the battle is unknown.

² To Agricola we may also ascribe the Roman fort at Carnarvon, whose earliest remains belong to his period.

corn and tribute by an equal distribution of the burden, while he got rid of those extortions which were more intolerable than the tribute itself. Hitherto the people had been compelled to endure the farce of waiting by the closed granary and of purchasing corn unnecessarily and raising it to a fictitious price. Difficult by-roads and distant places were fixed for them, so that states with a winter camp close to them had to carry corn to remote and inaccessible parts of the country.

(20) Agricola, by repressing these abuses in his very first year, restored to peace its good name. When summer came,¹ he assembled his forces, showed himself often in the ranks, praised good discipline, and kept the stragglers in order. He would himself choose the position of the camp, himself explore the estuaries and forests. Meanwhile he allowed the enemy no rest, laying waste his territory with sudden incursions, and having sufficiently alarmed him would then by forbearance display the allurements of peace. In consequence many states hitherto independent gave hostages and laid aside their animosities; garrisons and forts were established among them with a skill and diligence with which no newly-won part of Britain had before been treated.²

(21) The following winter passed without disturbance, and was employed in salutary measures. In order that a population scattered and barbarous and therefore inclined to war might learn the amenities of ordered and civilised life, Agricola gave private encouragement and public aid to the building of temples, courts of justice and dwelling-houses. Thus an honourable rivalry took the place of compulsion. He likewise provided a liberal education for the sons of the chiefs, and showed such a preference for the natural powers of the Britons over the more laboured style of the Gauls that they who lately disdained the tongue of Rome now coveted its eloquence. Hence, too, a liking sprang up for our style of dress, and the toga became fashionable. Step by step they

¹ A.D. 78.

² The campaign of A.D. 78 was probably in North and Central Wales.

were led to things which dispose to vice, the lounge, the bath, the elegant banquet. All this in their ignorance, they called civilisation, when it was but part of their servitude.¹

(22) The third year² of his campaigns brought new tribes into view, our ravages being carried as far as the Tanaus estuary.³ The enemy were so much alarmed that they did not dare to attack our army, harassed though it was by violent storms; and there was even time for the erection of forts. It was noted by experienced officers that no general had ever shown more judgment in choosing suitable positions, and that not a single fort established by Agricola was either stormed by the enemy or abandoned by capitulation or flight.⁴ These positions were secured from protracted siege by a year's supply. Winter brought with it no alarms; sorties were numerous; each garrison could hold its own; and the enemy were baffled and discouraged, for being wont to repair their summer losses by winter successes they now were beaten off in summer and winter alike.

(23) The fourth summer⁵ he employed in securing what he had overrun. Had the valour of our armies and the renown of the Roman name permitted it, a limit to our conquests could have been found in Britain itself; for Clota and Bodotria, estuaries which the tides of opposite seas carry far inland, are separated but by a narrow strip of land. This Agricola then began to defend with a line of forts, and, as all the country to the south was now occupied, the enemy were pushed as it were into another island.⁶

¹ Coins, pottery and architectural remains alike go to show that the romanisation of Britain began in full earnest under Agricola.

² A.D. 79.

³ Probably the Northumbrian Tyne; but the point is still under dispute.

⁴ Excavations in North England and Scotland have fully confirmed this judgment.

⁵ A.D. 80.

⁶ The Agriroman forts on the line of the Clyde and Forth were of small compass and they were not occupied for long. Part of the Scottish garrison was thrown forward to the neighbourhood of Stirling and Perth,

(24) In the fifth year of the war¹ Agricola, himself in the leading boat, crossed the Clota and subdued in a series of victories tribes hitherto unknown. In that part of Britain which looks towards Ireland he posted some troops, hoping for fresh conquests rather than fearing attack, inasmuch as Ireland, being between Britain and Spain and within easy reach of the Gallic sea,² might have been the means of connecting with great mutual benefit some most important parts of the empire. In soil and climate and in the disposition, temper and habits of its population it differs but little from Britain. We know most of its harbours and approaches, and that through the intercourse of commerce.³ One of the petty kings of the nation, driven out by internal faction, had been received by Agricola, who detained him under the semblance of friendship till he could make use of him. I have often heard him say that a single legion with a few auxiliaries could conquer and occupy Ireland, and that it would have a salutary effect on Britain for the Roman arms to be seen everywhere and for freedom, so to speak, to be banished from its sight.

(25) In the summer in which he entered his sixth year of office,⁴ his operations embraced the states beyond Bodotria; and as he dreaded a general movement among the remoter tribes and the danger of the roads to an invading army, he explored the harbours with a fleet. The navy, which Agricola first used as an integral part of his force, made an imposing show in his advance; the war was pushed on alike by land and sea, and infantry, cavalry and naval troops would often consort and fraternise in the same encampment, each service

part was held back in a large camp at Newstead-on-Tweed. The continuous turf wall along this line was built by Antoninus *c.* A.D. 140.

¹ A.D. 81.

² Tacitus here repeats Cæsar's error (see p. 16).

³ This trade proceeded from Britain rather than Gaul: otherwise Tacitus' erroneous notion as to the position of Ireland could not be explained. The volume of the trade always remained small; but it brought to Tacitus a better idea of the people of Ireland than Strabo (p. 22) possessed.

⁴ A.D. 82.

dwelling on its own achievements and experiences. The Britons too, as we learnt from prisoners, were confounded by the sight of a fleet, as if with the penetration of their inmost seas the conquered had their last refuge closed against them. The tribes inhabiting Caledonia flew to arms, and with great preparations made greater by the rumours which always exaggerate the unknown, themselves advanced to attack our fortresses and by their challenge caused us alarm: to fall back south of Bodotria and to march out rather than fly out, was the advice of cowardice disguised as prudence. Meantime Agricola learnt that the enemy would attack in several columns. Fearing that their superior numbers and knowledge of the country would hem him in, he too distributed his forces in three divisions and moved forward.

(26) When the enemy heard of this they suddenly changed their plan and with their whole force made a night attack on the ninth legion, as being the weakest, and cutting down the sentries, who were asleep or panic-stricken, broke into the camp. And now the battle was raging within the camp itself when Agricola, who had learnt from his scouts the enemy's line of march and had kept close on his track, ordered the most active soldiers of his cavalry and infantry to attack the rear of the assailants, while the entire army were shortly to raise a shout. A double peril thus alarmed the Britons, while the courage of the Romans revived. In their turn they rushed to the attack, and there was a furious conflict within the narrow passages of the gates till the enemy were routed. Both armies did their utmost, the one for the honour of having given aid, the other for that of not having needed support. Had not the flying enemy been sheltered by morasses and forests, this victory would have ended the war.

(27) Realising this, and elated by the glory they had won, our army exclaimed that they must penetrate the recesses of Caledonia and at length in an unbroken succession of battles discover the furthest limits of Britain. But the Britons thinking themselves baffled not so much by our valour as by our general's skilful use of an opportunity, abated nothing of

their arrogance, arming their youth, removing their wives and children to a place of safety, and assembling together to ratify, with sacred rites, a confederacy of all their states.

(29) Early in the summer¹ Agricola sent on the fleet, which by its ravages at various points might cause a vague and widespread alarm, and advanced with a lightly equipped force, including in its ranks some Britons of remarkable bravery, whose fidelity had been tried through years of peace, as far as the Mons Graupius,² which the enemy had already occupied. For the Britons, in no way cowed by the result of the late engagement, had made up their minds to be either avenged or enslaved, and convinced at length that a common danger must be averted by union, had by embassies and treaties summoned forth the whole strength of their states. More than 30,000 armed men were now to be seen, and still there were pressing in all the youth of the country, with all whose old age was yet hale and vigorous, men renowned in war and bearing each his own decorations.

(35) Agricola arrayed his eager and impetuous troops with the auxiliary infantry, 8000 strong, making up a strong centre, and 3000 cavalry massed on the wings. The legions were drawn up in front of the entrenched camp: his victory would be vastly more glorious if won without the loss of Roman blood, and he would have a reserve in case of repulse. The enemy, to make a formidable display, had posted himself on high ground; his van was on the plain, while the rest of his army rose in an arch-like form up the slope of a hill. Agricola, fearing that from the enemy's superiority of force he would be simultaneously attacked in front and on the flanks, widened his ranks, and though his line was likely to be too extended, and several officers advised him to bring up the legions, yet, so sanguine was he, so resolute in meeting danger, he sent away his horse and took his stand on foot before the colours.

¹ A.D. 83.

² Evidently the Grampian chain, whose name is derived from a misreading of Tacitus' text. Presumably Agricola advanced as far as the pass of Killiecrankie.

(36) The action began with distant fighting. The Britons with equal steadiness and skill used their huge swords and small shields to avoid or parry the missiles of our soldiers, while they themselves poured on us a dense shower of darts, till Agricola encouraged three Batavian and two Tungrian¹ cohorts to bring matters to the decision of close fighting with swords. Such tactics were familiar to these veterans, but embarrassed the enemy, for the swords of the Britons are not pointed, and do not allow them to grapple with the foe, or to fight in a *mêlée*. No sooner did the Batavians begin to close with the enemy, to butt him with the bosses of their shields, to stab him in the face, and after overthrowing the force on the plain to advance their line up the hill, than the other auxiliary cohorts joined with eager rivalry in cutting down their nearest adversaries. In the hurry of victory many wounded and even unhurt men were left behind. Meantime our squadrons of cavalry, finding that the charioteers had fled, broke into the infantry battle. But although they at first spread panic they were soon brought up by the close array of the enemy and the inequalities of the ground. The battle now appeared to be taking a most unfavourable turn for us, since the troopers could hardly keep their foothold on the hillside and were jostled by their mounts, and stray chariots or terrified horses without drivers dashed in blind panic into our flank or front.²

(37) Those of the Britons who still occupied the hill-tops at a distance from the battle and without fear for themselves sat idly disdaining the smallness of our numbers, had begun gradually to descend and to hem in the rear of the victorious army, when Agricola, who feared this very movement, opposed their advance with four squadrons of cavalry held in reserve by him for any sudden emergencies of battle. Their repulse and rout was as severe as their onset had been furious. Thus the enemy's design recoiled on himself, and the cavalry

¹ From Tongres near Liège.

² The text of ch. 36 is full of difficulties. In the above version the readings of J. G. C. Anderson's edition have been followed.

which by the general's order had wheeled round from the van of the contending armies attacked his rear. The open plain now presented an awful and hideous spectacle. Our men pursued, wounded, made prisoners only to slaughter them as others fell in their way. At this stage, according to each man's fancy, enemy masses which still kept their arms, fled before a few pursuers, those who had lost their weapons rushed madly upon their fate. On approaching the woods, they rallied, and as they knew the ground, they were able to pounce on the foremost and least cautious of the pursuers. Had not Agricola, who was present everywhere, ordered a force of strong and lightly-equipped cohorts, with some dismounted troopers for the denser part of the forest, and a detachment of cavalry where it was not so thick, to scour the woods like a party of hunters, serious loss would have been sustained through the excessive confidence of our troops. When, however, the enemy saw that we again pursued them in firm and compact array, they fled no longer in masses, or in mutual touch, as before, but dispersed and straggling they sought the shelter of distant and pathless wilds. Night and weariness of bloodshed put an end to the pursuit. About 10,000 of the enemy were slain; on our side there fell 360 men.¹

(38) Elated by their victory and their booty, the conquerors passed a night of merriment. Meanwhile the Britons were dragging off their wounded, calling to the unhurt, deserting their homes, and in their rage actually firing them, choosing places of concealment and abandoning them the next moment. First they would take counsel together, then they would part company. It was ascertained that some struck down their wives and children as in pity for them. The following day showed more fully the extent of the calamity. As it became known that the track of the flying enemy was uncertain and that there was no attempt at a rally, and as it was now impossible, with summer over, to

¹ Tacitus' own account of the battle is enough to show that the Roman losses must have been heavier.

extend the war, Agricola led back his army into the territory of the Boresti.¹ He received hostages from them, and then ordered the commander of the fleet to sail round Britain. The general himself, taking his infantry and cavalry by slow marches, so as to overawe the newly conquered tribes by the very tardiness of his progress, brought them into winter quarters, while the fleet with propitious breezes and great renown entered the harbour of Trucculum,² to which it had returned after coasting along the entire southern shore of the island.

IX. HADRIAN; ANTONINUS; SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS.

[(a) *Historia Augusta*, bk. i., ch. 11, § 2.]

After his masterful reform of the army he (Hadrian) paid a visit to Britain, where he set many things right and was the first to carry a wall eighty miles³ across country, so as to separate barbarians and Romans.

[(b) *Ibid.*, bk. iii., ch. 5, § 4.]

He (Antoninus) defeated the Britons through his governor Lollius Urbicus⁴ and built a new wall, of turf, on a line which had been cleared of barbarians.

[(c) *Ibid.*, bk. x., ch. 18, § 2.]

The greatest glory of his (Severus') rule is that he secured Britain with a wall carried across the island from ocean to ocean.⁵

[(d) Cassius Dio, bk. lxxvi., chs. 12-13.]

There are two very extensive tribes in Britain, the Caledonians and the Mæatæ. The Mæatæ dwell close up to the crosswall which cuts the island in two, the Caledonians behind them. Both live on wild waterless hills or forlorn and swampy

¹ Unknown.

² Also unknown: possibly on the Firth of Forth.

³ Seventy English miles.

⁴ An inscription containing the name of Urbicus has been found at Balmuildy, near Glasgow.

⁵ Septimius Severus merely repaired the wall of Hadrian. A close inspection of the architecture of the Northumbrian wall, and of the adjacent pottery sherds, has shown that the entire system of fortifications dates back to Hadrian.

plains, without walls or towns or husbandry, subsisting on pastoral products and the nuts which they gather. They have fish in endless plenty, but do not eat them. They live in huts naked and unshod, making no separate marriages and rearing all their offspring. They mostly have a democratic government and are much addicted to robbery. They go to war on chariots, with small quick teams, and their infantry are very fast on their feet and firm in a close fight. Their armament consists of a shield and short spear, with a copper knob at the end of the butt, so that it makes a noise against the shield, to the alarm of the enemy; and they also have daggers. They can bear hunger and cold and all manner of hardship; they will retire into their marshes and hold out for days with only their heads above water, and in the forest they will subsist on bark and roots.

Severus, desirous of subduing the entire island, invaded Caledonia and in his passage underwent untold trouble, cutting timber, razing hill-forts, spanning the marshes with dykes and the rivers with bridges. He never fought an action or saw an enemy in battle array. But sheep and kine were left on purpose for the troops to plunder, so as to draw them on and wear them out; for they suffered severely from the floods and were set upon in small parties. Unable to move forward or back, they were killed by their own comrades, to save them being captured: full 50,000 met their deaths.¹ Yet he did not desist until he had nearly reached the end of the island,² where he obtained a clear view of the sun's seasonal changes and the length of day and night in summer and winter time.

Having thus been carried through almost the whole enemy country—for in fact he generally was carried, because of his illness,³ in a covered chair—he resumed friendly relations with the Britons, having compelled them to come to terms and evacuate a large strip of land.

¹ The entire garrison of Britain probably did not exceed 40,000 men.

² A fort of Severus' age has been found at Ythan Wells, near Aberdeen. But his march through Scotland was a mere foray.

³ Severus died on the return journey at York.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENGLISH ON THE CONTINENT.

England is exceptional among the nations of modern Europe in having so many documents composed at so early a date in the vernacular: *The Laws*, *Beowulf*, *Widsith* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. Nevertheless, the bulk of the passages quoted in this book are from the Latin. When this is not so—except in the case of the four important English documents just mentioned—the fact is specified.

I. The Angles on the Continent, from Tacitus' *Germania*.

II. Offa, prince of Angel:

- (a) Offa's duel at the Eider, as recorded in *Widsith*;
- (b) Offa's reign, as recorded in *Beowulf*;
- (c) Pedigree of the Mercian kings;
- (d) Offa's duel at the Eider, as recorded by Saxo Grammaticus.

III. Early notices of the Saxons:

- (a) From the *Geography* of Ptolemy;
- (b) From the *Abridgement* of Eutropius;
- (c) From Ammianus Marcellinus;
- (d) From the *History against the Pagans* of Orosius;
- (e) From the *Letters* of Apollinaris Sidonius.

IV. Manners and Morals of 'Germania,' from Tacitus.

ONE great difficulty of a book like this is, that it can only give the literary evidence. The evidence of archæology and philology must be sought elsewhere. Yet some indication must be given as to whether archæology and philology confirm the literary evidence, or whether they throw doubt on it.

According to the Venerable Bede, who is 'our primary authority,' the invaders of Britain came from 'three of the most valiant nations of Germany, the Saxons, the Angles and

the Jutes' (for the whole passage see *Chapter II, Extract VII*, below). The Old English dialect of Kent, a district which, according to Bede, was settled by the Jutes, can be distinguished from that of the Angles and Saxons; but many of these distinctive features grew up after the settlement in England, though our information is too scanty for us to be quite certain as to all. But Kentish Law and Custom point to a more fundamental distinction, whilst an archæological study of grave-finds also supports Bede in emphasising a distinction between the culture of Kent and that of the Anglian and Saxon parts of the country.

According to Bede, the people of the Isle of Wight and of the opposite coast (around the Southampton Water) were also Jutish, and 'the archæologist, here at least, can find little fault with Bede's statement.'¹ Archæology confirms the connection between Kent and Wight more particularly because the rich cemetery on Chessel Down in Wight contained many articles similar to those found in Kentish graves.²

The validity of Bede's distinction between Angles and Saxons *has* been disputed; for example by Professor Chadwick, who recognises two races only, Jutes and Anglo-Saxons: 'the Anglo-Saxons may not originally have been a homogeneous people: but there is no evidence that any national difference survived at the time when they invaded Britain' (*Origin of the English Nation*, p. 89). But it would require very strong reasons to the contrary to make us disbelieve Bede on this point, supported as he is by the names of the English districts: West, South, Middle and East Saxons in the South; East and Middle Angles in the Midlands; whilst as to the Northumbrians being Angles, Bede, himself a Northumbrian, is hardly likely to have been misled there. Further, the latest archæological research, whilst it has cast doubt on certain of the criteria which used to be

¹Thurlow Leeds, *The Archæology of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements*, Oxford, 1913, p. 99.

²British Museum, *Guide to Anglo-Saxon Antiquities*, by Reginald A. Smith, 1923, pp. 1, 66.

thought to distinguish Anglian from Saxon remains, has emphasised others. Professor Baldwin Brown finds 'very distinct differentia between the two regions and races' in 'the cruciform brooches, the wrist clasps, and the girdle hangers' of the Anglian districts.¹ The latest attempt to draw the line between Anglian and Saxon areas on archaeological grounds is that of Mr. E. Thurlow Leeds.² The line drawn on grounds of dialectal peculiarities and place-names does not in all particulars agree with this,³ and here again, most of these dialectal peculiarities may have sprung up after the English settlement in England. There are, however, certain distinctions between the Anglian and the Saxon vocabulary which have been held to show that the Angles came from a district nearer Scandinavia than did the Saxons.⁴ Our linguistic information is very scanty, but, for what little it is worth, it confirms Bede as to the distinction between Angles and Saxons; at any rate, it does nothing to discredit him.

Bede's triple division of the invaders into Angles, Saxons and Jutes may, then, be accepted. As to the continental homes of these invaders, there has been more dispute.

(1) *The Angles*. There is no reason to doubt the express statement of Bede, supported as it is by the equally express statement of king Alfred (*Chapter VI, Extract IX*) that the Angles came from the district of Southern Sleswick, which is now the northernmost portion of Germany, immediately adjoining Denmark, and where the name 'Angeln' still survives. The Angles, according to Bede, emigrated in a body. The old home in Sleswick became debatable ground between Danes and Germans, and remained such down to the present day.

¹ *Saxon Art and Industry in the Pagan Period* (being Vols. III and IV of *The Arts in Early England*), by G. Baldwin Brown, 1915, p. 626.

² Map in *History*, Vol. X, July, 1925.

³ See especially Brandl, *Zur Geographie der altenglischen Dialekte* (*Abhandl. der Preuss. Akad. der Wissenschaften*), 1915.

⁴ *Eigentümlichkeiten des englischen Wortschatzes*, von Richard Jordan, Heidelberg, 1906.

There are two important pieces of evidence concerning the Angles whilst still on the Continent. Tacitus, writing about A.D. 98, gives details of their worship of a goddess *Nerthus*, 'Mother Earth.' Scholars were at one time disposed to emend this into *Hertha* or *Ertha*, and Swinburne wrote a *Song to Hertha*; but no goddess of that name was ever worshipped by the ancient Angles; the correctness of the form *Nerthus* is vouched for, by the fact that the Scandinavian form corresponding to that word would, according to normal phonological development, be *Njorthr*, and that we have evidence for the worship of such a deity, at Old Uppsala, with rites resembling those which Tacitus describes as rendered to *Nerthus*.

Tacitus' statement that the rites ended with the massacre of slaves may serve as a warning against accepting John Richard Green's idyllic, and quite undocumented, picture of the 'farmer commonwealths' of Sleswick, in which slavery was 'all but' unknown.

Even more demonstrably inaccurate is Green's statement that 'it is probable that the English had hitherto [i.e. before the conquest of Britain] known nothing of kings in their own fatherland.' On the contrary, our second piece of evidence is entirely concerned with the kings who reigned in Continental England; it records the first event in English history; this is an aggression by a tribe dwelling to the south of Sleswick, which was repulsed, while Wermund was king of the Angles, by the valour of his son Offa. Traditions of Offa's triumph were carried to England, and also continued to live in Sleswick. The Sleswick version was committed to writing by two Danish historians, Sweyn Aageson and Saxo Grammaticus, Sweyn writing a little before, and Saxo a little after, 1200: and about the same time the story, as preserved in England, was written down by a monk of St. Albans. As these two traditions apparently branched apart when the Angles left Sleswick in the Sixth Century, the features they possess in common presumably go back to the version as it existed at that date. Further, we have a

reference to Offa's victory in *Widsith*, which is probably the earliest extant English poem of any importance, and may date, in part at least, from the Seventh Century (*Extract II, a*), whilst the glory of his reign is remembered in *Beowulf*, a poem generally attributed to the early Eighth Century (*Extract II, b*). Many other historic kings are vouched for by *Widsith* or *Beowulf*: Attila the Hun, Ermanaric the Goth, Gundahari the Burgundian, Alboin the Lombard, Hygelac the Geat, all of whom are sufficiently confirmed by Latin or Greek historians, contemporary or not very much later. *Beowulf* also gives us information about Swedish kings, which is by centuries more primitive than anything similar which we have from other sources, and which has been confirmed in the most striking way by recent excavations.¹ There is no more reason to doubt the historic existence of Wermund and Offa than there is to doubt the existence of other monarchs mentioned in *Widsith* or *Beowulf*, who have become the subject of story. Nevertheless the full accounts, as written down from tradition about the year 1200, must contain a large element of fiction. I have, however, quoted from Saxo Grammaticus a small portion of his fine version of the story of Offa, despite its late date. For Saxo agrees with the English account of about five centuries earlier in recording that Offa defended his realm by a duel fought at the river Eider, and therefore against adversaries attacking from the South. If these accounts are independent, and if they diverged, as suggested above, and as a great deal of very strong evidence tends to show, when the latest Angles emigrated to England in the Sixth Century, then the ancient saga utilised in the histories of Sweyn Aageson and Saxo is an independent and primary authority. I regret that space does not permit the

¹ Especially the excavation of the mound of Ohthere by Sune Lindqvist in 1914-16. The whole evidence has been weighed in several pamphlets by Prof. Birger Nerman, and especially in his book just published, *Det Svenska Rikets Uppkomst*, Stockholm, 1925. Englishmen should note that they have left it to a professor of the University of Dorpat in Esthonia, to demonstrate the supreme historical importance of the earliest English epic.

inclusion of the equally fine version of Sweyn, or of extracts from the corrupted, but nevertheless interesting, version recorded by the St Albans monk.

We are able to fix chronologically the dynasty of kings ruling in ancient Angel with some exactness, because we possess the pedigree by which the kings of Mercia in historic times traced their descent from these ancient kings. Allowing thirty years for a generation, and counting back from the historic Penda, we find that Wermund must have reigned in the middle, and Offa towards the end of the Fourth Century A.D. It is an interesting illustration of the continuity of English history that, owing to the marriage of king Alfred with a lady of the Mercian royal house, our present king is descended from king Wermund and prince Offa.

This Mercian pedigree (*Extract II, c*) is found in its best form in two manuscripts, one preserved in the British Museum¹ and one at Cambridge.² Both are of the Ninth Century: they are copies of a document compiled, between 811 and 814, from materials some of which were even then old, and one of which was a genealogy of the Mercian kings, terminating about the end of the Seventh Century, with Æthelred, son of Penda.

This Mercian list, together with the Northumbrian and other pedigrees which accompany it, may be regarded as the earliest extant English historical document. For both the Northumbrian and the Mercian list show signs of having been written down towards the end of the Seventh Century, in the generation following the death of Penda; they both came, after revision, to be used in the History which goes under the name of Nennius. Ancient pedigrees are often useless, because the names they record have ceased to have any meaning or story attached to them. But in the case of the Mercian pedigree we are able, from a comparison of *Beowulf*, *Widsith*, Saxo Grammaticus, Sweyn Aageson, and the St. Albans *Lives of the Offas*, to attach stories to the

¹ MS. Cotton Vespasian B. VI. fol. 109b.

² MS. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 183.

names of Wermund and Offa. 'How much of these stories is history and how much fiction, it is difficult to say, but with them extant English history and English poetry and English fiction alike have their beginning.'

(2) *The Saxons and Jutes*. The home of the Saxons on the Continent is as clearly defined as that of the Angles. In the Second Century A.D. they were dwelling 'on the neck' of the 'Cimbric' peninsula, the northern part of which peninsula is now occupied by Denmark (see *Extract III, a*). This means that the Saxons at that date must have dwelt in the modern Holstein, immediately south of the Angles. Subsequently they spread into the district occupied by the modern Hanover, where we find them in historic times. This district of Hanover had in earlier times been the land of the Chauci, whom Tacitus mentions as dwelling there, whilst he never mentions the name of the Saxons. There must have been some amalgamation¹ of the two tribes, whether peaceable or by conquest. If so, the Chauci changed, not only their name, but their customs. Tacitus refers to them as living peaceful and secluded, provoking no wars, nor injuring others by rapine or robbery (cap. 35). The Saxon confederacy, on the other hand, became notorious for their sudden piracies (*Extract III, b-e*), so that long before their permanent conquest of Southern England, the shore from the Wash to the Southampton water had come to be known from their raids as 'the Saxon shore.'

Bede's statement as to the Saxon origin of the settlers is supported by archæology. Anglo-Saxon remains (always excepting those from the 'Jutish' cemeteries south of the Thames) resemble those found in the neighbourhood of the mouths of the Elbe and Weser: 'So strong is the resemblance

¹ Professor Oman (*England before the Conquest*, p. 215) states that the Greek historian Zosimus refers to the Chauci as 'part of the Saxons': but this cannot be included in our documents, as it rests on a conjectural emendation of the text of Zosimus (III, 6), *Χαούκους* for *Κουάδους*. But some such confederacy must have taken place, whether or no Zosimus records it.

that, were literary sources entirely wanting, the archæological evidence alone would point to North-west Germany as the district from which England was colonized.'¹

According to Bede, the ancient home of the Angles lay between the Saxons and the Jutes. As the Saxons dwelt to the south of Angel, the Jutes should then have dwelt to the north, in the modern Jutland. Here, neither philology nor archæology gives any support to Bede. To confirm Bede, the Kentish dialect should show more affinity with the Scandinavian than does the Saxon; but no such relationship can be demonstrated. On the contrary, scholars have seen a special kinship between Kentish and Frisian. The closest affinities between any of the Anglo-Saxon dialects and any of their continental relatives are apparently with the Frisian: but the special closeness of Kentish and Frisian has probably been exaggerated.² Of the linguistic evidence it is, then, difficult to say more than that it does not confirm Bede's statement that the Jutes dwelt north of the Angles.

The archæologists have found the closest affinities to Kentish culture in the Frankish cemeteries on the lower Rhine. Those who feel that it is rash to reject a definite statement of Bede, must therefore suppose either (1) that the Jutes reached Kent 'not directly from their northern seats, but after a preliminary sojourn somewhere near the mouths of the Rhine,'³ or else (2) that they are a composite people: 'there is nothing geographically inconceivable in a band of Ripuarian Franks moving down the Old Rhine and after joining themselves with a Jutish contingent, descending on the shores of Kent.'⁴ A diminution in the number of burials (pointing to a wholesale emigration) seems to have occurred in Jutland and North Sleswick as early as the Second Century

¹ Plettke, *Ursprung und Ausbreitung der Angeln und Sachsen*, 1921, pp. 65-6.

² Chadwick, *Origin of the English Nation*, 67; Björkman in *Englische Studien*, XXXIX, 1908, 361.

³ Baldwin Brown, *Saxon Art*, p. 742.

⁴ Thurlow Leeds, *Archæology of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements*, p. 137; cf. also Baldwin Brown, *Saxon Art*, p. 742.

A.D.¹ All the phenomena would be accounted for by supposing that the emigrants settled for a long time around the lower Rhine before the final settlement in Kent.

The settlers were, then, drawn from at least three, and possibly more tribes; one authority, not of great weight, mentions Frisians (*Chapter III, Extract IV*). In view of this widespread origin, it is all the more important not to neglect what Tacitus says of the Germans as a whole (*Extract IV, below*). The picture of groups of young warriors, gathering round some popular chief, leaving agriculture to the inferior grades of society, and living short but merry lives of warfare and feasting, agrees in all respects with the state of things which later we see depicted in *Beowulf*.

I. THE ANGLES ON THE CONTINENT.

From Tacitus' *Germania*, cap. 40.

Next [to the Longobardi] come the Reudigni, the Aviones, the Angli, the Varini, the Eudoses, the Suardones, and Nuthones, who are fenced in by rivers and forests. There is nothing to be noted concerning any of these tribes, save that in common they worship Nerthus, that is, Mother Earth, believing that she intervenes in the affairs of men, and visits the peoples in her car. There is a sacred grove in an island of the ocean, and in the grove a car, dedicated and veiled. One priest alone has access to it. He can tell when the goddess is present, and he attends her as she is drawn by a team of cows in reverent procession. Then there is holiday, wherever the goddess condescends to visit as a guest: they do not go forth to war; they do not take up arms; all weapons are laid aside: then, and then only, peace is known and loved, till the same priest brings back the goddess to her grove, tired of human converse. Car, draperies, and, if you will believe it, the very divinity, are washed in a secret lake, in which lake the slaves who do the work are forthwith drowned. Hence a mystic terror and a pious ignorance of what that may be which is seen only by those destined to die.

¹ Plettke, as above, 68-9.

This branch indeed of the Suevi stretches into the less known parts of Germany.

II. OFFA, PRINCE OF ANGEL.

(a) Offa's duel at the Eider, as recorded in *Widsith*.¹

[After a list of early Germanic kings.] Offa ruled over Angel; Alewih over the Danes, he was the boldest of all these men, yet did he not in his deeds of valour surpass Offa. But Offa gained, first of men, by arms, the greatest of kingdoms while yet a boy; no one of his years did greater deeds of valour in battle with his single sword; he drew the boundary against the Myrgingas at 'Sea-Giant's-Door'.² English and Suevi held it afterwards as Offa struck it out.

(b) Offa's reign, as recorded in *Beowulf*.

Offa, prince of heroes, [was], of all mankind, as I have heard, between the seas the best of earthly race. For Offa, brave amid the spears, was famous far and wide for his open hand and his victories; he ruled his native land with wisdom. From him sprang Eomær,⁴ a stay to warriors, kinsman of Hemming, descended from Wermund⁵ and mighty in war.

(c) Pedigree of the Mercian kings.

From MS. *C.C.C.C.* 183 [English].

Æthelred was the son of Penda, Penda of Pybba, Pybba of Creoda, Creoda of Cynewald, Cynewald of Cnebba, Cnebba of Icel, Icel of Eomær, Eomær of Angengiot, Angengiot of Offa, Offa of Wærmund, Wærmund of Wihtlæg, Wihtlæg of Weotholgiot, Weotholgiot of Woden.

(d) Offa's duel at the Eider as recorded by Saxo Grammaticus.

From Book IV (transl. by Oliver Elton, 1894, pp. 142-3).

Wermund had a son Uffo (i.e. Offa) tall, but dull and speechless. When Wermund became blind, the king of Saxony claimed his

¹ Ll. 35-44.

² 'Sea-Giant's Door' is the river Eider, the *Ægidora* of the Frankish annalists of the ninth century, the Old Norse *Ægisdyr*, 'the door of the sea-giant Ægir.'

³ Ll. 1954-62.

⁴ MS. *geomor*.

⁵ MS. *garmundes*.

kingdom, and suggested that the quarrel should be settled by their sons in single combat. Wermund, in despair, offered himself to fight, but this was rejected by the Saxon envoys with insult. Thereupon Uffo found his tongue, and undertook to meet, not merely the Saxon prince, but any chosen companion that prince might bring with him. [The reason is not altogether clear in Saxo: we learn however from Sweyn Aageson that Uffo had been struck dumb by his shame at the action of two of his countrymen, who had combined to avenge their father upon a single foe, contrary to the laws of the duel. Uffo redeems the honour of his country by this self-imposed handicap.] It was difficult to find a weapon strong enough for Uffo, but at last his father unearthed his old sword 'Skrep,' which he had buried in the earth rather than leave to his unworthy son :

So they repaired to the field of battle as agreed. It is fast encompassed by the waters of the river Eider, which roll between, and forbid any approach save by ship. Hither Uffo went unattended, while the prince of Saxony was followed by a champion famous for his strength. Dense crowds on either side, eager to see, thronged each winding bank, and all bent their eyes upon this scene. Wermund planted himself on the end of the bridge, determined to perish in the waters if defeat were the lot of his son: he would rather share the fall of his own flesh and blood than behold, with heart full of anguish, the destruction of his own country. Both the warriors assaulted Uffo; but, distrusting his sword, he parried the blows of both with his shield, being determined to wait patiently and see which of the two he must beware of most heedfully, so that he might reach that one at all events with a single stroke of his blade. Wermund, thinking that his feebleness was at fault, that he took the blows so patiently, dragged himself little by little, in his longing for death, forward to the western end of the bridge, meaning to fling himself down and perish, should all be over with his son. Fortune shielded the old father who loved so passionately, for Uffo told the prince to engage with him more briskly, and to do some deed of prowess worthy of his famous race; lest the low-born squire should seem braver than the prince. Then,

in order to try the bravery of the champion, he bade him not skulk timorously at his master's heels, but requite by noble deeds of combat the trust placed in him by his prince, who had chosen him to be his single partner in the battle. The other complied, and when shame drove him to fight at close quarters, Uffo clove him through with the first stroke of his blade. The sound revived Wermund, who said that he heard the sword of his son, and asked 'on what particular part he had dealt the blow?' Then the retainers answered that he had gone through no one limb, but the man's whole frame; whereat he drew back from the precipice and came again on the bridge, longing now as passionately to live as he had just wished to die. Then Uffo, wishing to destroy his remaining foe after the fashion of the first, incited the prince with vehement words to offer some sacrifice by way of requital to the shade of the servant slain in his cause. Drawing him by those appeals, and warily noting the right spot to plant his blow, he turned the other edge of his sword to the front, fearing that the thin side of his blade was too frail for his strength, and smote with a piercing stroke through the prince's body. When Wermund heard it, he said that the sound of his sword 'Skrep' had reached his ear for the second time.

III. EARLY NOTICES OF THE SAXONS.

(a) The Saxons in the *Geography* of Ptolemy, ii., 11, 7 [Greek].

The first occurrence of the name 'Saxon' is in Ptolemy, for Tacitus does not mention the tribe. Ptolemy (Claudius Ptolemæus) wrote in the second century A.D., at Alexandria. (Ed. C. Müller, Paris, 1883.)

[Reckoning from West to East.] After these the Lesser Chauci, as far as to the Weser: then the Greater Chauci, as far as to the Elbe: then, upon the neck of the Cimbric peninsula, the Saxons.

(b) The Saxons in the *Abridgement of Roman History* of Eutropius, ix., 21.

This is the first instance on record of the Saxons harrying the Roman Empire. Eutropius must have written his summary about

370, since it is dedicated to the Emperor Valens (364-378). It has been frequently edited: a convenient edition is that of Ruehl, Leipzig, 1887.

At this time [c. A.D. 286] also Carausius, though of low birth, had gained great fame as a soldier. He was stationed at Boulogne, to hold the sea, off the Belgian and Armorican coasts, which the Franks and Saxons troubled. He often captured many of the barbarians, but he did not restore the booty in full, either to the provincials or to the emperors. It began to be suspected that he connived at the barbarians, in order later to intercept them, and enrich himself with the booty. So Maximian sent orders that he should be executed; but he assumed the purple and occupied Britain.

(c) The Saxons in Ammianus Marcellinus.

Ammianus wrote a history of Rome from A.D. 96, where the histories of Tacitus stopped, to the death of Valens (A.D. 378). He was a contemporary of the events described in his later books, which are the only ones extant. (Ed. C. V. Clark, Berlin, 1910, etc.)

[xxvi., 4, 5; c. A.D. 365.] At this time throughout all the Roman world . . . the barbarous tribes on the frontiers were aroused, and were invading the territories nearest to them. . . . The Picts, Saxons, Scots, and Attacotti vexed the Britons with perpetual calamities. . . .

[xxvii., 8, 5; A.D. 368.] The Franks and Saxons, who bordered upon Gaul, were ravaging it wherever they could burst in by sea or by land, savagely robbing and burning, and murdering all prisoners.

[xxviii., 2, 12.] . . . The Saxons are feared beyond all other enemies because of the suddenness of their incursions. . . .

[xxviii., 5, 1; A.D. 370.] A multitude of the Saxons burst forth, made the difficult crossing of the Ocean, and sought the Roman frontier. [Ammianus then tells how, after some fighting, the Saxons agreed to withdraw, but were treacherously attacked, and slain to a man.]

[xxx., 7, 8; A.D. 375.] Valentinian [I] destroyed the Saxons,

who had broken out with fearful violence, and always in parts where they were least expected. They . . . were on the point of returning, laden with spoil. He overcame them by a device which was treacherous, but useful, and rescued the plunder from the routed robbers.

(d) The Saxons in the *History against the Pagans* of Orosius, vii., 32.

Orosius wrote his *History* about 417, to meet the criticism of those who, after the sack of Rome by Alaric in 410 and similar disasters, said that such things had not happened before the world became Christian. (Ed. Zangemeister, Leipzig, 1889.)

Valentinian, upon the very borders of the Franks, crushed the Saxons, as they were meditating a great and dangerous incursion into the Roman borders. The Saxons are a race situated upon the shores of the Ocean, and in pathless morasses, and are terrible by reason of their valour and mobility.

(e) The Saxons in the *Letters* of Apollinaris Sidonius, viii., 6.

Sidonius (c. 431-c. 484) was born of a distinguished family long settled in Gaul, and met, or corresponded with, most people of importance who were there in his day. After a distinguished career as man of affairs and of letters, he entered the church, and became bishop of Clermont about 470. Some ten years later he wrote to a naval friend (Namatius) these lugubrious consolations. (The poems and letters of Sidonius are edited by Lütjohann in *Mön. Germ. Hist.*, *Auct. Ant.*, viii.)

. . . A messenger arrived as I was on the point of ending my letter. I spent some time talking to him about you. He was quite certain that you had lately given the signal in your fleet, and were on service, half military, half naval, coasting the shores of the Ocean against the light curved raiding vessels of the Saxons, in which you can reckon, that however many of the crew you can see, so many brigands have you set eyes on. Those who command and those who obey, it is piracy they all teach and learn. So there is the greatest reason to warn you to be ever on the alert. It is an enemy more ferocious than any other. Unexpected he comes :

if you are prepared he slips away. . . . Shipwrecks do not terrify the Saxons: such things are their exercise. The Saxons are not merely acquainted with the terrors of the sea: they are familiar with them. For since a storm, should there be one, prevents observation and puts us off our guard, the hope of a surprise attack leads them gladly to imperil their lives amid waves and broken rocks. Moreover, before they return to their country, setting sail from the Continent and dragging their anchors from the hostile shore, it is their custom to drown barbarously every tenth captive (such is their deplorable religion) casting equal lots over the doomed crowd. With such vows do they bind themselves, and pay with victims.¹ . . .

IV. MANNERS AND MORALS OF GERMANIA.

From Tacitus' *Germania*, 2-25.

2. In ancient songs (which is their only form of record or annals) they celebrate their earth-born god Tuisto, and Mannus his son.

7. They choose their kings for noble birth, their generals for valour. Nor have the kings unlimited or arbitrary power: and the generals rule more by example than by authority: if they are active, conspicuous, and fight in the front, they are admired and followed. But to punish with death, imprison, flog, is allowed only to the priests. . . . They carry into battle certain images and symbols taken from their groves. And what above all stimulates their courage is that their troop or company is not formed by chance or casual gathering, but of families and clans. . . .

11. About smaller matters the chiefs deliberate: about more important things, all. Yet even those matters which are reserved for the general opinion, are thoroughly discussed by the chiefs. They assemble, unless any sudden need should

¹ Ennodius (*de vita Antonii*) refers to the human sacrifices of the Franks, Eruli and Saxons, who showed their high esteem of the Christian priesthood by preferring to select clerics as offerings to their gods.

happen, on fixed days, at the new or full moon: for they think this the most auspicious time for transacting business. They do not reckon by days, as we do, but by nights: so do they fix their appointments and their legal matters; they regard the night as preceding the day.¹ . . .

12. In the assembly, actions may be brought and capital crimes prosecuted. They make the punishment fit the crime. Traitors and deserters they hang on trees; the cowards, the unwarlike, and those stained with abominable vices they plunge into a morass, placing a hurdle above them. This difference in punishment has in view the idea, that crimes ought to be exposed when punished, but infamy buried out of sight. For lighter offences there are proportionate punishments: on conviction they are fined a certain number of horses or cattle. Half of the fine goes to the king or state, half to the injured man or his relatives.

In these same assemblies they elect the chiefs, who administer law in the districts and villages; each of these has a retinue of a hundred, chosen from the people, to give him advice and support.

13. They always carry arms when transacting business, public or private. . . . Distinguished birth, or a father's great acts, give the highest rank even to lads. Such lads attach themselves to men of approved valour, and are not ashamed to count as their followers. Even in this retinue there are differences of rank, made at the will of the chief. There is great emulation among these followers as to who shall rank first with his chief; and great emulation among the chiefs to possess the largest and bravest body of followers; the honour and the strength of the chiefs consists in being surrounded by a large force of picked youths: a distinction in peace, and a guard in war. A large and valiant retinue gives a chief a reputation, not only in his own tribe, but in the neighbouring ones; he is courted by embassies, honoured by gifts, and by his mere reputation can settle the issue of a war.

¹ Compare the constant reckoning by nights in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

14. When they go into battle, it is a disgrace for the chief to be surpassed in valour, and a disgrace for the retinue not to equal the valour of their chief. Further, it is an infamy and lifelong reproach to return alive from a battle in which the chief has fallen. To defend the chief, to protect the chief, to put the credit of one's own brave deeds to the chief's renown—this is their peculiar loyalty. The chief fights for victory: the followers¹ for the chief. If their native state sink into prolonged peace and repose, many young noblemen volunteer for service with tribes who are waging some war; both because they hate peace and can win honour more easily amid dangers, and only by force and warfare can maintain their big body of followers. Indeed, the followers look to the liberality of their chief for their war-horse and their victorious, blood-stained lance. For they receive no pay save rude, though abundant, feasts. War and rapine provide means for the chief's munificence. Nor is it so easy to persuade them to plough the earth and await a harvest, as to challenge a foe and win honourable scars. They even think it feeble to win with sweat what can be won with blood.

15. . . . It is customary for the tribes, voluntarily and by individual contribution, to give cattle or crops to the chiefs, which they accept as a distinction, and which supply their wants. They are, above all, pleased with gifts from neighbouring tribes, which are sent not only by individuals, but by the tribe; choice horses, fine weapons, ornaments, neck-rings. And we have now taught them to take money.

16. It is known well enough that the German tribes have no cities, and that they cannot even endure houses close together. They dwell scattered and apart, as a spring or a meadow or a grove has pleased them. . . .

¹ These followers are, of course, the 'thanes' and *gesithas* of Anglo-Saxon society, whose faithfulness comes out so strongly in the entry in the *Chronicle* under the year 755[757], in the *Battle of Maldon*, and later in the Scandinavian account of the battle of Stamford Bridge. In the case of all four chiefs who fall, the retinue elects to die with them, See Chapter V, *Extract I*; Chapter VIII, *Extracts I and XX*,

18. Their marriage customs are strict, and no part of their manners more praiseworthy. . . . 19. No one there laughs at vice, and they do not call it 'the spirit of the age' to corrupt and be corrupted.

21. A man has to take up the feuds of his father and kinsfolk, as well as their friendships. But these feuds are not implacable; even homicide can be atoned for by a certain number of cattle and sheep. The entire family receives this compensation. . . .

22. No one is disgraced by passing a whole day and night in drinking. As might be expected among those who drink so deeply, their frequent quarrels seldom end with words, more often with wounds and bloodshed. . . .

25. The slaves occupy their own farms, and, like tenants, must pay so much grain, cattle and clothing; no more is expected of them: household offices the wife and children fill. They rarely flog their slaves or punish them with bonds or hard labour. They often kill them, not from motives of systematic discipline, but in the rage of passion. . . .

CHAPTER II.

THE FIFTH CENTURY (c. 410 TO SOME TIME BEFORE 500).

FROM THE 'EDICT OF HONORIUS' TO THE RALLY AGAINST
THE HEATHEN UNDER AMBROSIUS AURELIANUS.

I. The 'Edict of Honorius,' from Zosimus.

II. Distresses of Britain, from the so-called *Chronicle of 'Prosper.'*

III. Procopius on the termination of Roman rule.

IV. The Hallelujah Victory, from the *Life of S. Germanus*.

V. Renewal of Saxon attacks, from the *Chronicle of 'Prosper.'*

VI. Britain independent, from Gildas.

VII. The English settlement according to Bede.

VIII. The English settlement according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

IX. The English settlement according to Gildas.

WE have three sources of information for this period, Continental, English, and British: all of them scanty.

(1) *Continental references to Britain.* Of these there are four of great value, which all relate to the earlier portion of the century: they are not very much later than the events they narrate: at any rate they are Fifth Century. A Byzantine historian, Zosimus, records the secession of Britain from the Roman Empire (*Extract I*), whilst a Gaulish Chronicler tells of the distress of this country (*Extract II*). *The Life of S. Germanus* gives us a glimpse of Britain somewhat later, in 429, showing it to be still Roman so far as its civilisation is concerned, though harried by Saxon and Pictish plunderers (*Extract IV*). Later still, the above-mentioned Gaulish Chronicle, now apparently quite contemporary, notes Britain as having been in 442 reduced to subjection by the Saxons (*Extract V*). After

this, all communication between Britain and the Roman world seems to cease. Procopius, writing in Constantinople about the middle of the next century, records the superstition that Britain was a place whither the souls of the dead were ferried from the opposite side of the Channel; whilst, as for the portion beyond the Roman wall, Procopius declares it to be a desert inhabited by serpents, where the atmosphere is so foul that no man could live there for half an hour. The story which Procopius tells of how an Anglian princess was jilted by a prince of the Warni on the Continent, and how the Amazonian lady brought her false lover to reason by a vast naval expedition, must be regarded as romance, and not history. If, as is probable, Procopius derived his strange tales from the Angles who were sent on embassy, in his time, to Constantinople, they have, in spite of their absurdity, some positive value. The gruesome account of the regions beyond the Roman wall is, perhaps, evidence that no Angles had yet settled there. Further, Procopius' statement, that the Romans were never able to recover Britain after the death of the usurper Constantine in 411, is important. We have so little information for this period that evidence like this, even though given much more than a century later, cannot be ignored (*Extract III*). Procopius' note concerning the tribes inhabiting Britain in his day is given for what it is worth in the next chapter (*Chapter III, Extract IV*). For the rest, however, space unfortunately forbids the inclusion of these very interesting tales, which are important, as showing how ignorant the best informed people in the capital of the Roman Empire could be concerning Britain.

(2) *The English Sources.* The Venerable Bede, who wrote his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* about 731, gives for this century comparatively few details derived from English sources. These, however, are very important (*Extract VII*). Most of Bede's information for this century, however, is derived from a Celtic source (Gildas), and is quite secondary. As to this, see page 74 below,

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* gives a number of dates and names (*Extract VIII*). That *Chronicle* was drawn up under Alfred about 890. It was certainly compiled on the basis of earlier Chronicles which have since been lost. Professor Chadwick (*Origin of the English Nation*, p. 26) has shown reason to believe that one of these sources was a set of Annals ending in 754, and therefore over a century old in Alfred's time. The compilers may conceivably have had good documentary evidence for the whole period after the Conversion, which had introduced Latin clerks and writing, three centuries before Alfred's day. But even so, since writing was, so far as we can gather, never used for the purpose of historical record during the heathen period, it follows that these chronicles must have been dependent on poems and oral tradition for the Fifth and Sixth Centuries. Consequently the value of the *Chronicle* for this period will always remain a subject of dispute. Yet it is probable that, even in heathen times, despite the absence of written records, the succession of different monarchs and the lengths of their reigns may have been committed to memory with considerable exactness. Formulas of this kind are given in the next chapter (*Chapter III, Extracts III a, V b*).

(3) *The Celtic Sources*. It is from the *Historia Brittonum* of 'Nennius' that we derive the familiar story of the love of the evil Vortigern (*Guortigirnus*) for Rowena (*Romwenna*) the beautiful daughter of Hengest, together with much other tradition, too full of incredible details, and too obviously fictitious, to be quoted at length here.

It seems a pretty safe conclusion that one of the several extant recensions of the *Historia Brittonum* was drawn up about the year 800, or shortly after. But many scholars have believed the nucleus of the work to be much older than this. They have argued that Nennius was little more than an editor, working up an anonymous Seventh Century *Historia Brittonum*,¹ which, from various indications had,

¹ For an elaborate attempt to separate out this nucleus, see Thurneysen in the *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie*, xxviii., 80-113.

they think, been written just before or just after the downfall of the Northumbrian kingdom: say 679-85. Quite recently this view has been disputed by Professor Liebermann,¹ who argues that there was no such *Historia Brittonum* existing before 800, and that Nennius' work is a compilation of that date or shortly after. Even so, earlier material must of course have been used, and Liebermann, whilst disbelieving in the wholesale incorporation of a large Seventh Century nucleus, allows that Nennius may have used for his date of Vortigern a Romano-British treatise, ending in, and possibly penned soon after, 486.

The portion of the *Historia Brittonum* which will be most frequently quoted in this book is a little section (chapters 61 to 65) which deals with the history of Northern England, and ends suddenly about the time of the downfall of Northumbria in 685. Even scholars who have rejected the idea of a large Seventh Century nucleus have admitted that this small portion is such a nucleus.² Liebermann does not admit this, because he thinks he can trace in it borrowings from the *Ecclesiastical History* of Bede (written c. 731): but I do not think that Liebermann has made out his case here.

The Nennius problem cannot be summed up in a sentence: all we can say is that some great scholars hold Nennius' book to be a work compiled about the year 800: others hold it to be an expansion, made about 800, of an earlier *Historia Brittonum* written about 680. But we should note that the parts which there is most necessity to quote in this book are precisely those for which the earlier date seems most arguable.

It may be noted that 'Nennius' would make the Saxon Conquest begin in 428 (cap. 66) and in another place (cap. 31) in 375. This latter date is also given in an English document (*MS. C.C.C.C.*, 183), which probably drew it from the same source as the *Historia Brittonum*. Neither date seems possible, and in neither case is the authority of serious weight.

¹ *Essays in Medieval History presented to T. F. Tout*, Manchester, 1925, No. 3: 'Nennius the author of the *Historia Brittonum*.'

² Zimmer, *Nennius Vindictus*, 78-105, 269.

The date 428 may have some connection with the visit of S. Germanus, and the victory then gained over Saxon and Pictish plunderers. But the great permanent settlement of the Saxons in the South-East of Britain must be later than the year 429, when S. Germanus crossed from Gaul, visited S. Alban's shrine at Verulamium, and found it apparently quite intact.

Appended to the best complete MS. of the *Historia Brittonum* (B.M., Harleian, 3859) is a short Welsh Chronicle, known as the *Annales Cambriae*. The actual Harleian manuscript of the *Historia* and the *Annales* (an important Latin-Celtic document) was transcribed in the late Eleventh or more probably early Twelfth Century; but the *Annales* must have been copied from an earlier manuscript, completed in the Tenth Century. The first event entered belongs to the year 453, the last to the year 954, after which come twenty-three blank annals, and the Chronicle ends at the year 977. This manuscript of the *Annales Cambriae* is therefore apparently copied from one completed in 977. The *Annales Cambriae* are much more meagre than the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*—the events of the average century would barely fill an octavo page of modern print, were it not for the numerous blanks. The entries, however, in so far as they can be tested or verified from other documents, seem authoritative, and they will be quoted from time to time below.

The one contemporary document written by a native of these islands is the book of Gildas, *De Excidio*, 'On the destruction and conquest of Britain,' which claims to be, and obviously is, written at a period when the Anglo-Saxon conquest had only made moderate progress. According to the *Annales Cambriae*, Gildas died in 570. He quickly became famous, and is quoted by Columbanus, Abbot of Luxeuil, in a letter to Gregory the Great,¹ about the year 600. The date of the *De Excidio* of Gildas is limited by the fact that he denounces Maglocunus, king of Gwynedd, who according to the *Annales Cambriae* died of the 'great mortality' in 547.

¹ *Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini Aevi*, p. 158, in *Mon. Germ. Hist.*

Now the Great Plague, which spread from Western Asia all over Europe, is known to have been devastating South-East Europe in 543-4. It might well have reached Wales by 547, and therefore this date, and, so far as it goes, the accuracy of the *Annales*, is confirmed.

For the Sixth Century then, Gildas is an eye-witness; and in the next chapter we shall find that for that period his evidence, though scanty, is of the utmost value. But for the early Fifth Century he depends upon tradition, which is obviously not always accurate (*Extract VI*); however, for the late Fifth Century he must have learnt personally from those who had been eye-witnesses (*Extract IX*) and his evidence becomes important.

The year 410, when Alaric sacked Rome, is recognised as marking an era in European history. The same year perhaps marks the end of the official connection between Roman Britain and the Roman Empire. But British tradition, as represented by Gildas, and later by the *Historia Brittonum*, recognised the beginning of the end as having come some twenty-seven years earlier, when Magnus Maximus, a Roman officer in Britain, attempted to make himself emperor of the West. Maximus crossed over into Gaul, taking with him part of the army stationed in Britain: none of these troops, at any rate according to British tradition, ever returned. The forces of Britain were similarly depleted a second time by the usurper Constantine (407-11). He is stated to have been a person of no ability, who owed his power to the fact that his name was identical with that of the great Emperor who had ruled a hundred years before. Like Maximus, Constantine crossed into Gaul, with a portion of the British army; but he proved a failure; like his predecessor Maximus he was at last taken and executed.

It was the disorganisation of his rule which compelled the Britons to reject it, and provide for themselves, an action which is said to have been confirmed by Honorius, the Roman Emperor of the West, in or about 410. The 'Edict

of Honorius' is therefore not a recognition of the independence of Britain, in the sense that the treaty of 1783 recognised the independence of the American colonies. At most, it only means that Honorius put a spoke in the wheel of a rival, by telling the British that they need not obey a usurper. His edict left Honorius quite free to reoccupy Britain after the defeat of Constantine. Did he, in fact, do so? Some scholars believe that he did.¹ Their argument is that, in the Western *Notitia Dignitatum*, an official record which includes a complete survey of the distribution of the military forces of the provinces, and which is argued to have been drawn up in 427-8, Britain is depicted as still in Roman occupation. Others² argue that the *Notitia* had not been brought up to date so far as Britain was concerned, and that the elaborate list of troops is simply drawn from some earlier document, and enumerates, not the troops in occupation of Britain, but the troops who ought to have been there. The archæological evidence, and particularly the absence of coins later than 410, is urged as evidence that the Romans cannot have been in effective occupation after that date. (In weighing the value of the argument from the absence of later coins, the general failure of the copper coinage throughout Western Europe at this date has to be remembered.) In the case of the forts on the wall, the evidence at present available suggests evacuation when Magnus Maximus in 383 crossed over into Gaul, and this tends to show that the *Notitia* had not been brought up to date; for the *Notitia*, at a much later date, represents those forts as still garrisoned.

We cannot attach much importance to the statement of Gildas, who makes the Romans return twice, after their first

¹ See J. B. Bury, *The Notitia Dignitatum*, in the *Journal of Roman Studies*, x. (1920), pp. 131-54. A similar view is taken by Edward Foord, *The Last Age of Roman Britain*, 1925; but I cannot share Mr. Foord's confidence in Gildas as an authority for the first half of the Fifth Century. For G. Macdonald's reply to Foord, see *History*, x., 327 (1926).

² R. G. Collingwood, *The Roman Evacuation of Britain*, in the *Journal of Roman Studies*, xii. (1922), pp. 74-98.

evacuation, to rescue Britain from the Picts and Scots. For in British tradition, as represented by Gildas and the *Historia Brittonum*, the mutiny of Constantine is forgotten, and it is the withdrawal of the troops by Magnus Maximus in 383 which is regarded as the evacuation handing over the island to the mercy of the Picts and Scots. According to Gildas, the Roman armies on two subsequent occasions rescued Britain from the Picts and Scots. In detail, the account of this rescue, as given by Gildas, is demonstrably inaccurate; he represents the wall of Hadrian as having been then first built, although in reality it was at that time already nearly three centuries old. But there is this element of truth in Gildas' account: that after the withdrawal of Magnus Maximus, Britain *was* rescued from the barbarians by Roman arms in the time of Stilicho (c. 395).

But to Bede, who knew, from Orosius, something of the history of the Roman Empire, it is not the withdrawal of the troops by Maximus, but the sack of Rome, which marks the end of Roman rule in Britain. Bede borrowed from Gildas the account of the Romans twice returning to rescue the British, but he fitted it into his historical sketch (*Book I, cap. 12*) as occurring after the date 'when the Romans ceased to reign in Britain,' which to him meant after the year 409. So Bede's story of the Roman expeditions of rescue, after 409, merely results from an attempt to harmonise two independent sources on a mistaken basis. Where Bede could get reliable information he was the most careful of historians: but on this point he was dependent upon Gildas, and drew a mistaken inference from what he found in his original. His evidence here is, therefore, historically worthless.

All that can be said, is that scholars are not at present agreed as to the exact date when the official connection of Britain with Rome ceased, any more than they are as to the exact date when the plundering raids of the Saxons developed into expeditions aiming at permanent conquest and settlement.

I. THE 'EDICT OF HONORIUS.'

From the *History* of Zosimus, Book V, cc. 5, 6, 10 [*Greek*].

Nothing is known of the life of Zosimus. His *History* is placed by its editor¹ as between 450 and 501. It is usually dated c. 500. This notice concerning Britain was probably derived by Zosimus from the Greek historian Olympiodorus, whose work has been lost. Olympiodorus was contemporary with the events here described, and was 'unusually well informed about affairs in the West.'²

The barbarians from beyond the Rhine [i.e. the Saxons], ravaging at will, compelled the inhabitants of Britain, and some of those of Gaul, to secede from the Roman Empire, and to live in independence, no longer obeying the laws of the Romans. And so the Britons, taking up arms, and struggling bravely on their own behalf, freed their communities from the onslaught of the barbarians. . . . This British and Gallic secession happened in the time of the rule of Constantine, because the barbarians, moved by his neglect, had made their attacks. . . .

And Honorius, having written letters to the cities in Britain, exhorting them to look to their own safety, and having gained the goodwill of the soldiers by making gifts to them out of the money sent to him by Heraclian, lived in all ease.

II. DISTRESSES OF BRITAIN.

From the so-called *Chronicle* of 'Prosper Tiro' [ed. Mommsen, *Mon. Germ. Hist., Auct. Ant.*, ix., 652-4.]

This *Chronicle* covers the years 379-452, and 'in its later part the writer shows himself to be a contemporary of the events he narrates' (Mommsen). Mommsen argues that the *Chronicle* was written in the South of Gaul. The attribution to Prosper Tiro is erroneous; this *Chronicle* is in some respects inconsistent with Tiro's *Epitoma Chronicon*, from which it must be carefully distinguished. The text is translated as arranged by Mommsen.

In the sixteenth year of Honorius and Arcadius [410], the multitude of the enemy so prevailed that the strength of the

¹ L. Mendelssohn, Leipzig, 1887.

² Bury, *Journal of Roman Studies*, x., 150.

Romans was extremely diminished. Britain was devastated by an incursion of the Saxons. The Vandals and Alans wasted part of Gaul; Constantine the usurper kept a hold on the remainder. . . . Finally the very Rome, the head of the World, was horribly exposed to the depredations of the Goths.

III. PROCOPIUS ON THE TERMINATION OF ROMAN RULE.

From the *Vandalic War*, Bk. I, c. 2 [*Greek*: ed. Dindorf, 1833, p. 318].

Constantine was defeated in battle and slain, together with his sons. Notwithstanding this, the Romans were never able to recover Britain, which thenceforth continued to be ruled by usurpers.

IV. THE HALLELUJAH VICTORY.

From the *Life of S. Germanus*, cc. 17, 18.

This has been recently (1920) edited by W. Levison, as a supplement to Vol. vii *Scriptorum rerum Merovingicarum* in the *Mon. Germ. Hist.*

S. Germanus was Bishop of Auxerre from 418 to 448. Constantius of Lyons must have written this *Life*, to judge from its dedication to two bishops, about 480, that is some fifty years after the events here narrated. The two visits of Germanus to Britain can be dated accurately. The first visit, in which Germanus was accompanied by Lupus, Bishop of Troyes, is referred, in the contemporary *Epitoma Chronicon* of Prosper Tiro, to the year 429; the second visit may be placed in 447, as it is said to have occurred just before the death of the Saint. The *Life* gives no indication of any permanent settlement of Saxons in Britain at either of these periods: the Britons seem to be living the ordinary life of Roman provincials, harried however by raids of Saxons and Picts, over whom they gain a victory by the help of Germanus.

These sections, with practically no change, are worked by Bede into his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Book I, cc. 17-21. They thus come in Bede's narrative after the account of the permanent settlement of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes; but Bede rightly notes that the visit of S. Germanus is earlier than this settlement.

Legend connected Germanus with the tyrant Vortigern, whose abominations are represented as so great that Germanus pursues him throughout the country with all the British clergy, and upon a certain rock prays for his sins forty days and forty nights. Upon another tyrant, Benli, S. Germanus, with greater severity, calls down fire from Heaven, destroying him and his whole city. It is with such embellishments that the story of Germanus and the 'Hallelujah Victory' is given in the *Historia Brittonum*. But the *Historia Brittonum* seems to have been written two and a half centuries after the visit of Germanus, and possibly more (see p. 70 above). It evidently drew upon some romantic *Legend of S. Germanus* which has been lost, and which may be ignored, whilst the authentic Life of the Saint is a document of great value.

Meantime the Saxons and Picts made war upon the Britons with united forces. . . . The Britons, in fear, thought themselves unequal to their foes, and begged the help of the holy men, who, hastening to them as they had promised, inspired them with so much confidence that one might have thought that they had been joined by a very great army. . . . The holy days of Lent were nigh at hand: the presence of the priests rendered them more religious, so that the people were edified by sermons every day, and flocked eagerly to be baptised. . . . A church was woven out of boughs for the feast of the Resurrection of our Lord, and was equipped, within the camp, as if it had been in a city. The army advanced, fresh from baptism, the faith of the people was fervent; they relied, not on temporal arms, but upon the help of God. Their state of equipment was announced to the enemy, who hastened forward, expecting a victory over an unarmed host. But their approach was made known to the Britons by scouts.

Now when Easter was over, the Britons took to their arms and began to prepare for the war, and Germanus offered to lead them. He picked out the most active soldiers, surveyed the surrounding districts, and noticed, in the line of the enemy's advance, a valley surrounded by high hills. In that place he drew up his new army, he being himself the general; and the Britons, lying in ambush, saw the ferocious horde of the

enemy approaching. Then suddenly Germanus, bearing the standard in his hand, told them all with one voice to repeat his words. The priests shouted a triple Alleluia at their foes, who were approaching carelessly, thinking that none knew of their coming. The cry was taken up with one mighty shout, and echoed from side to side of the enclosed valley: the enemy were smitten with terror, thinking that the rocks and the very sky were falling upon them; such was their fear that they could hardly run quickly enough. They threw away their arms in their disorderly flight, glad to escape naked: a river devoured many in their headlong fear, though in their advance they had crossed it in good order. The innocent army saw itself avenged, a spectator of a victory gained without exertion. The abandoned spoils were collected . . . and the bishops triumphed over an enemy routed without loss of blood; the victory was won by faith, not by might.

So the bishops returned [to Gaul], regretted by all the land, having settled the affairs of that most wealthy island, and overcome their foes, both spiritual and carnal, that is to say both the Pelagians and the Saxons. Their own merits, and the intercession of the blessed martyr St. Alban,¹ procured them a smooth crossing, and their happy vessel restored them in peace to their longing flock.

V. RENEWAL OF SAXON ATTACKS.

From the so-called *Chronicle of 'Prosper Tiro'* [ed. Mommsen, *Mon. Germ. Hist., Auct. Ant.*, ix., 660].

Apparently contemporary. See *Extract II*, above.

In the nineteenth year of Theodosius [441-2] the provinces of Britain, after having been long vexed with various disasters and ill chances down to the present moment, are now reduced to subjection by the Saxons.

¹ To whose shrine they had made gifts.

VI. BRITAIN INDEPENDENT.

From the *Liber de Excidio* of Gildas, cc. 19-21.

Gildas' account of the sufferings of the 'citizens' as he calls the Romanised British, in the period between the Roman evacuation and the deliberate calling in of the Saxon invaders as mercenaries, shows the confusion which we might expect from so vague a person, when he is dealing with events a century before his time. We read of the withdrawal of the Roman troops by Magnus Maximus, followed by attacks by the Picts and Scots, the appeal of the Britons to Rome, the sending of a Roman legion to the rescue and the building of a turf wall; the second withdrawal of the Romans, a second attack by Picts and Scots, a second appeal to Rome, the sending of cavalry and a fleet by the Romans, and the building of a stone wall from sea to sea; the third withdrawal of the Roman troops, followed by an immediate onslaught by Picts and Scots; utter devastation; and a third, but this time vain, appeal to Rome, addressed to Aetius in his third consulship; then a British rally, followed by a period of plenty, during which government was carried on by a succession of native kings; then the threat of a new invasion of the Picts and Scots, and the folly of the proud tyrant who calls in Saxon auxiliaries to meet this threat. Now the third consulship of Aetius in 446 seems too late to fit satisfactorily into this scheme, since the much-disputed date of the calling in of the Saxon invaders can hardly be put later than 455, and may be earlier. (See *Extract VII*, below; and, for the general untrustworthiness of Gildas for this period, p. 74 above.)

[The Romans] take their farewell of the country, as never again to return.

(19) No sooner have they gone back to their land, than the foul hosts of the Picts and Scots land promptly from their coracles. . . . These two races differ in part in their manners, but they agree in their lust for blood, and in their habit of covering their hang-dog faces with hair, instead of covering with clothing those parts of their bodies which demand it,¹ . . . They seize all the northern and outlying part

¹ Is this a reference to the kilt?

of the country as far as to the wall.¹ . . . Upon this wall stands a timorous and unwarlike garrison. . . . The wretched citizens were pulled down from the wall and dashed to the ground by the hooked weapons of their naked foes. . . . What shall I add? The citizens desert the high wall and their towns, and take to a flight more desperate than any before. Again the enemy pursue them, and there is slaughter more cruel than ever. As lambs by butchers, so are our piteous citizens rent by their foes, till their manner of sojourning might be compared to that of wild beasts. For they maintained themselves by robbery for the sake of a little food. Thus calamities from outside were increased by native feuds; so frequent were these disasters, that the country was stripped of food, save what could be procured in the chase.

(20) Therefore again did the wretched remnants send a letter to Aetius, a powerful Roman, 'To Aetius, three times consul, the groans of the Britons': 'The barbarians drive us to the sea, the sea drives us to the barbarians: between these two methods of death we are either massacred or drowned.' But they got no help. Meantime dire famine compelled many to surrender to their spoilers. . . . But others would in no wise surrender, but kept on sallying from the mountains, caves, passes and thick coppices. And then for the first time, trusting not in man but in God, they slaughtered the foes who for so many years had been plundering their country. . . . For a time the boldness of our enemies was checked, but not the wickedness of our own countrymen: the enemy left our citizens, but our citizens did not leave their sins.

(21) For it has ever been the custom of our nation, as it is now, to be weak in rebutting the enemy, but brave in civil war. . . . During these truces, the cruel wound of the distressed people is healed. . . . When the ravage of the enemy was checked, the island overflowed with such an abundant

¹ Hadrian's wall, fragments of which remain between Newcastle and Carlisle.

supply as is remembered in no former age, whereupon luxury increased in every way. . . . Kings were anointed not by the ordinance of God, but because they were more cruel than others; and a little later they were slaughtered by those who had anointed them, not after any examination of their true merits, but because others still more savage had been elected. If anyone of them seemed milder, and in some degree more heedful of the truth, the hatred and the weapons of all were directed against him as if he had been the subverter of Britain. . . .

VII. THE ENGLISH SETTLEMENT ACCORDING TO BEDE.

In the Chronological Summary at the end of the *Ecclesiastical History*, and again in his *Chronica Majora*, Bede makes it clear that the date for the arrival of Hengest is not 449, but some undefined year when Marcianus was Emperor of the East, and Valentinianus [III] of the West. This period he reckons to begin from 449. The actual period jointly covered by these two reigns (during which, therefore, according to Bede, Hengest must have landed) begins in 450 and ends in 455. The first fight between the invaders and the British, definitely mentioned in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, is there dated 455. (See below, p. 83.)

From Bede's *History*, I, 14, 15; (based on the translation of Thomas Stapleton, 1565).

And they agreed all, with their King Vurtigern, to demand aid of the Saxons beyond the seas. Which thing doubtless was done by God's own appointment, that the wicked people might be thereby plagued, as by the end it shall most manifestly appear.

The year of the incarnation of our Lord 449, Marcianus, the forty-sixth emperor after Augustus, with Valentinian, reigned seven years. In whose time the people of the Angles or Saxons, being sent for of the said king into Britain, landed there in three 'long ships,' and by the king's commandment were appointed to abide in the east part of the land, as if they were to defend the country like friends, but indeed, as

it proved afterward, minding to destroy the country as enemies. Wherefore encountering with the northern enemy, the Saxons had the better. Whereof they sending word home into their country, as also of the fertility of the land and the cowardliness of the Britons, the Saxons sent over a great navy and number of men better appointed for the wars, which being now joined with the former band, drew to a stronger army than all the power of the Britons was able to overcome. These by the Britons were allowed a place to dwell among them, with that condition, that they should war for them against their enemies, and should receive wages of the Britons for their travails. These that came from beyond the seas were from three of the most valiant nations in Germany: that is, the Saxons, the Angles, and the Jutes. Of the Jutes came the people of Kent and of the Isle of Wight, and they which in the province of the West Saxons are called unto this day 'the nation of the Jutes,' right over against the Isle of Wight. Of the Saxons, that is of that region which is now called that of the Old Saxons, descended the East Saxons, the South Saxons, and the West Saxons. Of the Angles, that is of that country which is called Angul,¹ and from that time to this is thought to stand deserted in the midst between the lands of the Jutes and the Saxons, descend the East Angles, the Middle Angles, the Mercians, and all the progeny of the Northumbrians, together with the other people of the Angles. Their chief captains are said to have been two brothers, Hengist and Horsa, of the which Horsa, being afterwards slain in battle by the Britons, was buried in the east parts of Kent, where his tomb bearing his name is yet to show. They were the sons of Wictgisl, whose father was Witta, whose father was Wecta, whose father was Woden, of whose issue many kings of sundry kingdoms had their original.

¹ Aldorman Æthelwerd, writing towards the year 1000, expands Bede's statement thus, 'Ancient Anglia is situated between the Saxons and the Gioti, having a chief town which is called Sleswic.'

VIII. THE ENGLISH SETTLEMENT ACCORDING TO THE
'ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE.'

The names below are given as in the oldest manuscript (the *Parker*, or A, manuscript).

449. Mauricius and Valentines [*sic*, for Marcianus and Valentinianus] obtained the kingdom [the Roman Empire] and reigned seven winters. In their days Hengest and Horsa, invited by *Wyrhtgeorn* [Vortigern], king of the Britons, sought Britain, in the place which is named *Ypwines fleet* [Ypwine's bay, Ebbsfleet], at first as a help to the Britons, but later they fought against them.

455. Hengest and Horsa fought against King Vortigern, in the place which is called *Agæles threp*; and his brother Horsa was slain. And after that Hengest took the kingdom, and Æsc¹ his son.

457. Hengest and Æsc fought against the Britons in the place which is called *Crecganford*: and there they slew four thousand men: and the Britons then left Kent, and with great fear fled to London.

465. Hengest and Æsc fought against the 'Welsh' near *Wippedes fleet*, and there slew twelve leaders of the 'Welsb': and one of their thanes was slain, whose name was Wipped.

473. Hengest and Æsc fought against the 'Welsh,' and took plunder beyond counting; and the 'Welsh' fled the English like fire.

477. Ælle came to Britain, and his three sons, Cymen, and Wlencing, and Cissa, with three ships, to the place that is called *Cymenes ora* [Keynor, near Wittering, Sussex] and there they slew many 'Welsh,' and drove some to flight in the wood that is called *Andredes leag* [the Weald].

485. Ælle fought against the 'Welsh' near the place of the burn of *Mearcræd*.

488. Æsc succeeded to the kingdom, and was king of Kent for 24 winters.

¹ Æsc is the 'Oeric, otherwise called Oisc' of Bede, II, 5. See below, p. 119.

491. Ælle and Cissa beset *Andredes cester* [Anderida, Pevensey], and slew all who dwelt therein, nor was there even one Briton left.

IX. THE ENGLISH SETTLEMENT ACCORDING TO GILDAS.

From the *Liber de Excidio*, cc. 22-26.

Gildas' account of the invasion of the Saxons bears a remarkable resemblance to his account of the earlier devastations of the Picts and Scots : in each case we have a sudden incursion involving utter devastation, a rally against the invaders, then a period of truce troubled with civil, but not with foreign war. Though Gildas is no great authority for the earlier period, we can hardly refuse to accept his evidence as to a state of things lasting down to his own day.

Gildas states that he was himself born in the year of the battle of Mount Badon, that year being the forty-fourth from some other event which the obscurity of the text does not enable us to define with certainty. The question of the date of that battle is dealt with in the next section. It is here important to note that possible dates are shortly after 493, c. 503, or 516. This later date is the best authenticated, and if we accept it we are compelled to accept Gildas' 'forty-four years' as being the period intervening between the battle of Mount Badon and the first appearance of Ambrosius Aurelianus, which would then have to be placed about the year 472. If, on the other hand, we accept the earlier dates for the battle of Mount Badon, 493 or 503, we can hardly put the beginning of the career of Ambrosius *very much* later than 472, since according to Gildas a good deal of fighting intervenes between his first appearance and the battle of Mount Badon.

It seems therefore, if we accept Gildas' account (which we must, as it is beyond all comparison nearest to the events narrated), that in little more than a generation after landing, the invaders had overrun the country from shore to shore, and had then been checked and driven back by Ambrosius. This is important because, had we nothing but the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to guide us, we might assume that the first forty years were spent in conquering, foot by foot, Kent and the coast of Sussex. Such an inference has indeed been drawn by some modern historians, though it rests partly on unjustifiable identifications of the place-names mentioned in the *Chronicle*, and partly on the unjustifiable assumption that no fighting took place except that recorded in the *Chronicle*.

One fact, mentioned by Bede, confirms Gildas' statement. Bede gives (II. 5) a list of those who had exercised authority over all the English south of the Humber: Ælle is the first, Ceawlin the second, and after Ceawlin the series is fairly continuous. But since Ælle flourished in the latter part of the fifth century, and Ceawlin apparently in the latter half of the sixth, there must have been a long period in the earlier part of the sixth century during which the English had no single leader. Ælle is contemporary with the stand of the British under Ambrosius Aurelianus; after this the English attack apparently went to pieces: the English presumably broke up and settled in small kingdoms within the devastated area, near the coast. The British, according to Gildas, 'swarmed like bees when a storm is brewing' under the shelter of Aurelianus. They probably left a devastated 'no man's land,' much in the same way as the Roman provincials of Noricum are recorded to have evacuated all their towns nearest to the barbarians. In the case of Britain we have no such record, but the fact that in the following century there was a long truce to the fighting, apparently without either treaty or intercourse between the Celtic kingdoms of the West and the English kingdoms on the South and East coast, would be more easily accounted for if we imagine large spaces of devastated territory between. This, too, would help to account for the fact that the Celtic admixture for which any philological evidence can be adduced is so small.

[A rumour reaches the British that the Picts and Scots are again meditating invasion.]

A council is called to decide what was best to be done to repel such deadly and frequent irruptions and plunderings of the abovesaid nations.

(23) Then all the councillors, together with their haughty king,¹ are so blinded that (devising a help, say rather a destruction for the country) they introduced those ferocious Saxons of unspeakable name, hateful to God and men, bringing as it were wolves unto the fold in order to beat back the nations of the North. . . . A flock of cubs burst forth from

¹ Bede gives the name of the king *rege Vurtigerno*: possibly from Bede the name has been interpolated into two manuscripts of Gildas: *Vortigerno*, *Gurthigerno*.

the lair of the barbaric lioness in three *keels* as they call them¹ in their language, that is in three warships, with a favourable wind and with good augury. For it had been foretold them, by a prophecy on which they relied, that for 300 years they would hold the country to which they were directing their prows, and that for half that time, that is 150 years, they would often lay it waste. [By the order of that luckless king they landed first in the eastern part of the island, and there fixed their horrible claws, pretending that they were going to fight for our country, but really to fight against it. Their motherland, learning the success of her first band, sends forth a larger body of these mercenary dogs, which comes across in ships, and is united with the bastard men-at-arms already here. From that time the seed of iniquity, the root of bitterness, the poisonous growth worthy of our merits, springs up among us with shoots and tendrils of ferocity.

So the barbarians were introduced into the island, as soldiers about to undergo (as they falsely said) great dangers in defence of their hospitable entertainers. They ask regular supplies to be given them. This was granted for a good time, and, as the proverb goes, stopped the dog's throat. But again they complain that their monthly supplies are not sufficient. They deliberately make plausible occasions of quarrel, and say that, unless more liberality is shown them, they will break their agreement and depopulate the whole of the island. And without delay they execute their threat.

(24) For the fire—a fire of just vengeance by reason of our former sins, fed by the hand of these sacrilegious ruffians in the east, was spread from sea to sea. It destroyed the neighbouring cities and regions, and did not rest in its burning course until, having burnt up nearly the whole face of the island, it licked the Western Ocean with its red and cruel tongue. . . . All the 'colonies' were levelled to the ground by the frequent strokes of the battering ram, and all

¹ O.E. *ceol*, 'keel' a word still in provincial use to signify 'a lighter,' quite distinct from 'keel,' a part of the ship, which is from the Norse,

the inhabitants, with the overseers of the church, priests and people, were slaughtered, with swords flashing, and flames crackling on every side. Terrible was it to see, in the midst of the streets, tops of towers torn from their lofty fittings, the stones of high walls, holy altars, fragments of bodies, covered with clotted blood, so that they seemed as if squeezed together in some ghastly wine press. There was no burial for the dead, save in the ruins of their homes, or the bellies of beasts and birds (with all reverence to the blessed souls, if indeed many such were found, which at that time were carried by the holy angels to Heaven). . . .

(25) So some of the wretched remnant were caught in the mountains and all murdered there : others, forced by famine, surrendered, to be for ever the slaves of their foes, if indeed they were not slain on the spot—verily the greatest favour ; others with great wailing sought the regions beyond the sea, and, under the swelling sails, chanted, in place of the rower's cry, these words 'Thou lettest us be eaten up like sheep, and hast scattered us among the heathen.'

Others remained in their country albeit with fear, and trusted their lives to hills and precipitous mountains, dense forests and crags by the sea. When some time had passed, and the most cruel of the plunderers had returned home, this remnant was strengthened by God. To them, from all sides, our wretched citizens flocked, as eagerly as bees when a storm is brewing. . . . Their leader was Ambrosius Aurelianus, a modest man, who alone of the Roman nation was left alive amid the tumult of so troubled a time. His kinsfolk, who had worn the purple, had been slain in these distresses : his descendants nowadays have greatly degenerated from their ancestral virtue, yet they make head, and challenge the victorious barbarians to battle. By the grace of God they have had the victory.

(26) From that period sometimes our citizens, sometimes the enemy have had the victory . . . until the year of the siege of Mount Badon.

CHAPTER III.

THE SIXTH CENTURY (c. 500-597).

THE HEATHEN INVASION CHECKED, AND RESUMED.

- I. The first half of the Century, according to Gildas.
- II. Arthur, from the *Historia Brittonum* and the *Annales Cambriae*.
- III. West Saxon Records, from the *Genealogical and Chronological Note*, and from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.
- IV. Britain according to Procopius.
- V. Northern England, from the *Historia Brittonum*; and the *Northumbrian Regnal List*.
- VI. From Bede's Chronological Summary.

THE authorities are, as in the preceding century, from the 'Welsh' side Gildas, the *Historia Brittonum*, and the *Annales Cambriae*; from the English, Bede and the *Chronicle*.

The contemporary evidence of Gildas proves conclusively that, from the time of his birth to that of his writing (most probably before 547), the territory saved from the invaders by the British rally had been held unimpaired (*Extract I*). The first half of the century must, then, have been a period of comparative quiet, resulting from the decisive check received by the invaders at Mount Badon. The *Historia Brittonum* and the *Annales Cambriae* attribute this British victory to Arthur, whom, however, neither Gildas nor Bede nor the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* mentions. But the *Chronicle* is equally silent concerning the indisputably historic Ambrosius Aurelianus, and the battle of Mount Badon itself: such silences throw more doubt upon the completeness of the record of the *Chronicle* than on the existence of Arthur.

Bede's silence regarding Arthur does not count, for he depends upon Gildas. The silence of Gildas is remarkable, yet we must remember that Gildas is mainly concerned with lament and denunciation. In the exactly parallel case of Wulfstan, 500 years later (see below, *Chapter VIII, Extract IV*), we are not surprised to find no mention of the heroism of Byrhtnoth, or of the successful defence of London. The silence of Gildas concerning Arthur may mean no more than that he has no evil to say of him. What is important to note is that the situation, as we gather it from Gildas, agrees quite remarkably with what we gather from the earliest accounts of Arthur in the *Historia Brittonum* and the *Annales Cambriae*. From the *Historia* we learn that Mount Badon was the last of Arthur's twelve great battles against the heathen; from the *Annales* we learn that it was twenty-one years after the battle of Mount Badon that Arthur fell, as did also Medraut (who is, of course, Modred), in the battle of Camlann. Now Gildas tells us that the series of battles against the heathen culminating in Mount Badon was followed by a long period of peace; broken, not by renewed Saxon attacks, but by the civil broils of the younger generation. For, Gildas tells us, so long as the generation lived which had witnessed this British rally culminating in Mount Badon, kings, magistrates and priests all did their duty. He does not mention by name any one of the excellent people of this generation: probably their names were too familiar to need enumeration, for they must still have been in power in his boyhood. But they are none the less to be reckoned with, although Gildas leaves them anonymous. All the analogy of other legends would lead us to suppose that the leading hero of the crowning victory of Mount Badon, and of the long period of prosperity which followed it, would be remembered in story: and when we find the fame of a certain Arthur obscuring that of the earlier Ambrosius Aurelianus, the most rational explanation is surely to assume that Arthur was foremost among these blameless kings, and their followers, whose glory was redressing human wrong, and whose virtues

could move even Gildas from his melancholy mood of dyspeptic denunciation.

We have the first account of Arthur in the *Historia Brittonum* (*Extract II*). Now we have seen that some scholars suppose that this portion of the *Historia* was written down, substantially in the form in which we now have it, about the year 680. Others¹ have maintained that the *Historia* was written in the early Ninth Century (say 800-830). So this account of Arthur must have been composed (doubtless from earlier records, whether oral or written) at least 160 years, and at most three centuries, after the events narrated. But this is no reason for rejecting it. The poem of *Beowulf*, in the judgment of most scholars, was composed between these limits (680-800): yet it preserves, with much exact historical detail, records of Scandinavian kings who must have been contemporary with Arthur (see above, p. 53). No one seriously doubts the substantial accuracy of these historical records in *Beowulf*, though they must depend entirely upon oral tradition, are preserved in a country far remote from their scene of action, and are mixed up with much fabulous matter about dragons and monsters. The weight of proof must surely lie upon those who would deny that there is a historic foundation for such well-known matters as Arthur's victories over the Saxons, especially when preserved in a society like that of Sixth Century Celtic Britain, where writing for purposes of record would not be unknown. It is true that we see the figure of Arthur already growing mythical in the mention of him and his dog in the later sections about the 'Wonders of Britain' annexed to the *Historia Brittonum*. But these are quite distinct in their origin from the section on Arthur's battles.² Neither they, nor the later fantastic developments of the Arthurian story from the Twelfth Century onwards, should be allowed to

¹ For example, quite recently, Liebermann. See above, p. 70.

² On this point consult, for example, Thurneysen in the *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, xxviii., 104 (1895-6).

prejudice the evidence for a Roman-British war leader (*dux bellorum*) Arturus or Artorius.

The absence of any reference to the battle of Mount Badon is not the only difficulty in the way of accepting the account of the West-Saxon invasion as given in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. There are many further difficulties. ① Cerdic is (perhaps) a Celtic name, and if so is peculiarly unlikely to be held by a chief coming from Continental Saxony. ② The events recorded are linked up with places containing the name of the chief character. Now it is of course possible that *Cerdices ora* actually *was* named after Cerdic, though it looks like a reminiscence of the naming of *Cymenes ora* after Cymen (see above, p. 83). But mankind has a tendency to build up fictitious history from place-names: and when so many heroes are mentioned together, each one connected with a place or places named after him, we are right to be suspicious. Our suspicions are confirmed by 'Port,' who lands at Portsmouth, the Roman name of which, *Portus Magnus*, had been current for generations before 'Port' is supposed to have landed there. Similarly *Wightgar* is made to rule the Isle of *Wight*, yet the name *Wight* (*Vecta*) is pre-Saxon. ③ The account is not consistent with itself: the West Saxons land at *Cerdices ora* nineteen years after their leader had landed there; and the double mention of *Cerdices ford* equally suggests the combination of two versions. ④ We have an early document giving the regnal years and genealogy of the West Saxon kings. One copy of this is prefixed to the *Parker MS.* of the *Chronicle*, but it is probably much older than the *Chronicle* of Alfred's day: certain linguistic considerations would lead us to place it nearly 150 years earlier. This early *Genealogical and Chronological Note* (for which see *Extract III (a)* below) gives a chronology which cannot be reconciled with that of the *Chronicle*. ⑤ We know from Bede that not Saxons, but Jutes, were settled round Southampton Water (see above, p. 82).

The *Chronicle* account has been ably defended by Mr. W. H. Stevenson (*The Beginnings of Wessex*, in the *English*

Historical Review, xiv., p. 32, 1899). Each of the objections raised above can be met individually. 'It is not beyond the reach of the long arm of coincidence that a *Wihgtar* should have ruled in Wight.' Mr. Stevenson emphasises that the British in the West must have been violently disturbed about this time, to account for the wholesale emigration to Brittany. But what is impossible is, not so much the *Chronicle* account, as the deductions which modern historians have drawn from it. They have depicted a West Saxon state, founded on the coast, to the west of the Southampton Water, and gradually forcing its way, after generations of fighting, to the Thames valley. The archæological evidence, which has been collected since Mr. Stevenson wrote, is conclusive against this, for early Saxon cemeteries are unknown in the coast district west of the Southampton Water, whilst they are common in the upper Thames valley. This has led many scholars to hold that the kingdom of Wessex was founded by invaders approaching, not northwards from the Channel, but westwards up the Thames (see Chadwick, *Origin of the English Nation*, 34). Mr. Leeds tells us that 'archæological investigation renders it wellnigh impossible to believe that a large number of invaders advancing along that line (Portsmouth or Salisbury) should have left practically no traces of settlements in their passage.' Yet the archæological evidence does not disprove the landing of Cerdic and a small band of raiders west of the Southampton Water, but only the assumption that they settled there. Cerdic may have come to land in the West with his five shiploads of men, harried there sufficiently to drive oversea many inhabitants of Damnonia, and finally settled down, with his plunder, as leader of the West Saxons who had reached the upper Thames valley by way of the Thames. Why should the Saxons in the Sixth Century have been less mobile than the Danes in the Ninth? The Roman roads were probably in better condition. The Anglo-Saxon account can only be founded on song or tradition, and therefore, even if the facts stated are correct, cannot possibly give us *all* the facts. We

must always beware of treating it as a scientific summary of the complete chain of events.

Mr. E. Thurlow Leeds has recently argued for an invasion in a south-westerly direction, from the Wash, by the Ickniel Way (*The West Saxon Invasion and the Ickniel Way*, in *History*, X, 97-109, July, 1925).

With the last quarter of the Sixth Century, however, we reach a period the memory of which must still have been fresh when clerks and writing reached the West Saxon Court, with Christianity, in the early Seventh Century. The *Chronicle* may well be accurate, at any rate approximately, as to the date 577, marking the great onslaught of Ceawlin, which was decisive, in so far as the capture of Gloucester, Cirencester and Bath cut off the British of Wales and the West Midlands from those of the South-West. Many of the details regarding Ceawlin are of course exceedingly doubtful, such as his conquest of Eynsham and Bensington *from the British* in 571. 'It is archæologically certain that the Saxons held the district immediately south and west of Oxford at least three-quarters of a century before' (E. T. Leeds in *History*, X, 105). However, the importance of Ceawlin is confirmed by Bede's statement that he exercised supreme authority over all the English south of the Humber, being the first to do so since Ælle. The entries relating to Ceawlin must therefore be taken more seriously than those relating to the problematical Cerdic.

The *Historia Brittonum*, besides recording the triumphs of Arthur, further shows King Urbgen fighting victoriously against the Angles of Bernicia (*Extract V*).¹ The mention of Urbgen comes from the section of the *Historia* which deals

¹ This section of the *Historia Brittonum* contains a reference to the Welsh poets, Taliessin and the rest. The bearing of the works attributed to these poets upon the history of this period is a complicated and disputed question, which I am not competent to discuss. The case for them is stated by Sir John Morris-Jones, 'Talesin,' in *Y Cymmrodor*, xxviii., 1918; the case against, by J. Gwenogvryn Evans, 'Talesin, or the critic criticised,' in *Y Cymmrodor*, xxxiv., 1924.

with Northern England, and this section is likely to have been completed about 680, or slightly later. So, as Urbgen and his antagonists belong to the end of the Sixth Century, the record may well have been compiled less than a century after their time. Urbgen is the Urien of romance, father of Ywaine, and brother-in-law of Arthur. His murderous wife belongs to romance ('Go fetch me my lord's sword, for I never saw better time to slay him than now'), and she cannot have been Arthur's elder half-sister, since Urbgen is more than a generation later than Arthur. It is noteworthy that, in the North, the British were driving the Angles back to the coast about the same time that the British in the South were being conclusively defeated by Ceawlin. The crushing British defeat in the North was not to come till early in the next century, at the hands of Æthilfrid; and even after that a British king temporarily reoccupied York (see below, *Chapter IV, Extracts III, X*).

Bede passes over this century of Heathendom very briefly. His chronological summary gives only six entries for the century. Two refer to eclipses of the sun, and their accuracy (in one case exact, in the other one day out) tends to confirm our confidence in Bede's care. The other four entries are given below (*Extract VI*).¹

NOTE.—The Date of the Battle of Mount Badon.

Bede says that the battle of Mount Badon took place forty-four years after the arrival of the Saxon invaders in Britain: this, according to his reckoning, would put the battle between

¹ Interesting studies are (1) *The Conquests of Ceawlin*, 1924, by Major P. T. Godsall. This is an attempt to elucidate the campaigns of the second Bretwalda by principles of strategy. It may be doubted whether the scanty information given in the *Chronicle* affords enough foundation. Major Godsall can claim that the argument of his earlier book, *The Storming of London, and the Thames Valley campaign*, 1908, has been confirmed by archaeological evidence, showing that the Saxons fought their way up the Thames valley. *The Early Wars of Wessex*, 1913, by A. F. Major, is more cautious; and it extends to the campaigns of Alfred where we possess documents, still all too scanty, but reliable so far as they go.

the years 493 and 499. Bede thus differs from Gildas, whom in this passage he is otherwise following rather closely. But as the earliest MS. of Bede is almost contemporary with him (first half of the Eighth Century), whilst the earliest and best MS. of Gildas belongs to the Eleventh Century, Bede's evidence cannot be overlooked; not because for this period his authority can for a moment weigh against that of Gildas, but because the MS. of Gildas which Bede used was three centuries or more earlier than any which we possess, so that Bede's transcript may be better evidence of what Gildas actually wrote than are the manuscripts of Gildas now extant. If, however, we reject Bede, and keep the reading of the manuscripts of Gildas, the battle 'was the forty-fourth year': by this Gildas apparently means forty-four years ago, reckoning backwards from the date when he is writing. The *Annales Cambriae*, however, date this battle in 516, and their authority is generally good. As the *De Excidio* must have been written before 547, this allows, at most, only thirty-one years. We must therefore either abandon the date of the *Annales Cambriae* altogether, and, reckoning 'the forty-fourth year' back from some time before 547, place the battle of Mount Badon some time before 503. Or, adhering to the date 516 of the *Annales*, we must interpret 'the forty-fourth year' as meaning that the battle of Mount Badon took place that length of time *after the appearance of Ambrosius Aurelianus*, which will therefore have to be placed about 472.

I. THE FIRST HALF OF THE CENTURY, ACCORDING TO GILDAS.

From the *Liber de Excidio*, 26.

From that time [of Ambrosius Aurelianus] sometimes our citizens, sometimes the enemy were victorious (that the Lord might test our race, as he did the Israelites, whether they loved him, or no): down to the year of the siege of Mount Badon. In that year took place almost the last slaughter of

these gallows-birds, but by no means the least, and this was the forty-fourth year, as I know, with one month elapsed, which is also the year of my birth.¹ But even now the cities of our country are not inhabited as they were before, but are in a wretched state, deserted and wrecked. For our foreign wars have ceased, but not our civil strife. For both the terrible desolation of the island, and also the unexpected recovery of it, remained in the minds of those who were witnesses of these marvellous events. And for this reason kings, public magistrates, private persons, priests and ecclesiastics all did their duty. But when they died, an age succeeded who had not experienced that terrible time, and knew of nothing save the present prosperity. So all rules of truth and justice were shaken and subverted. . . . Britain has kings, but they are tyrants, judges, but they are unrighteous (Gildas then goes on to denounce by name five kings: Constantine of Damnonia [Cornwall and the adjoining South-Western parts], Aurelius Caninus, Vortipor of Demetia [South Wales], Cuneglas, and, the greatest of all, Maglocunus [of North Wales] 'more generous than others in giving, but more reckless in sinning, valiant in arms, but more mighty in working out thy soul's destruction.')

II. ARTHUR.

From the *Historia Brittonum*, 56.

In that time the Saxons grew strong in number, and increased in Britain. When Hengest was dead, Oetha his son crossed from the north part of Britain to the kingdom of Kent. From him the kings of Kent spring. Then Arthur

¹*quique quadragesimus quartus ut novi orditur annus mense iam uno emenso qui et mee nativitatis est*, which seems to mean that the year of the Battle of Badon (and also of the writer's birth) was the forty-fourth from that now beginning, with one month elapsed. This would be clearer if we suppose, with Mommsen, that the words *ut novi* are a corruption of *est ab eo qui*, or something like that. It is only in one manuscript (Cambridge, Ff. I. 27), and that a late one (Thirteenth Century), that Mount Badon is described as 'near the mouth of the Severn.'

fought against them in those days, with the kings of the Britons, but he was their leader in war (*sed ipse dux erat bellorum*). The first battle was at the mouth of the river called Glein. The second, and the third, and the fourth, and the fifth on another river called Dubglas, in the land Linnuis. The sixth, on the river called Bassas. The seventh, in the wood Celidon, that is *Cat Coit Celidon* [the battle of the wood Celidon]. The eighth was the battle in Castle Guinnion, in which Arthur carried on his shoulders the representation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the heathen were turned to flight in that day, and great was the slaughter of them, through the virtue of our Lord Jesus Christ and His mother the Blessed Virgin Mary. The ninth battle was in the City of the Legion. He fought his tenth battle on the shore of the river called Tribruit. The eleventh battle was in the mountain called Agned. The twelfth battle was on Mount Badon, in which there fell in one day 960 men from the onslaught of Arthur only, and no one laid them low, save he alone. And in all his battles he was victor. But they, when in all these battles they had been overthrown, sought help from Germany and increased without intermission; and they brought kings from Germany to rule over them in Britain, till the time when Ida reigned, who was the son of Eoppa (*Eobba*) and the first king in Bernicia.

From the *Annales Cambriae*.

[516.] The Battle of Badon, in which Arthur carried the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ for three days and three nights on his shoulders, and the Britons were the victors.

[537.] The Battle of Camlann, in which Arthur and Medraut fell.

III. WEST SAXON RECORDS.

(a) From the *Genealogical and Chronological Note*.

This Old English Note is prefixed to the *Parker MS.* of the *Chronicle*, but it is much older than the compilation of the

Chronicle in Alfred's reign. Professor A. S. Napier, who edited another version of Alfred's time, with collations from five other texts, argued, from the spelling of some of the names, that a Note must have been written down not later than 750. It was doubtless preserved as a formula by memory from much earlier times. Some stages have evidently been dropped out. Ceawlin reigned not 542-57, but, according to the *Chronicle*, from 560 to 592 or 593. For a full discussion of this Note, see *Modern Language Notes*, xii., 105: February, 1897.

It was in the year when 494 winters had passed from the birth of Christ, that Cerdic and Cynric his son came up at *Cerdices ora*, with five ships. Cerdic was son of Elesa [the genealogy to Woden is then given]. And six years after they landed, they subdued the kingdom of the West Saxons, and they were the first kings who won the West Saxon land from the 'Welsh.' And he ruled for sixteen years. And when he died his son Cynric succeeded, and held the kingdom twenty-six winters. Then he died. Then Ceawlin, his son, succeeded, and held it seventeen winters. . . .

(b) From the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (compiled c. 890).

Parker MS., corrected by comparison of other texts.

495. Two chieftains came to Britain, Cerdic and Cynric his son, with five ships, in the place which is called *Cerdices ora*, and that same day they fought against the 'Welsh.'

501. Port came to Britain, and his two sons, Bieda and Mægla, with two ships, in the place which is called Ports-mouth, and they slew a young British man, a very noble man.

508. Cerdic and Cynric slew a British king, named Natan-leod, and five thousand men with him. And afterwards, the land was called *Natan leaga* up to *Cerdices ford*.

514. The West Saxons came to Britain with three ships, in the place which is called *Cerdices ora*; Stuf and Wihtgar fought against the Britons, and put them to flight.

519. Cerdic and Cynric took the kingdom, and the same year they fought against the Britons where it is now called *Cerdices ford*.

527. Cerdic and Cynric fought against the Britons in the place which is called *Cerdices leaga*.

530. Cerdic and Cynric took the Isle of Wight, and slew a few men in *Wihtgaræsburg*.

534. Cerdic died, and his son Cynric continued to reign for twenty-six winters: and they gave the Isle of Wight to their two kinsfolk, Stuf and Wihtgar. . . .

544. Wihtgar died, and was buried in *Wihtgaraburg*. . . .

552. Cynric fought against the Britons in the place which is called *Searoburg* [Sarum] and put the Britons to flight.

556. Cynric and Ceawlin fought against the Britons at *Beranburg*.¹

560. Ceawlin succeeded to the kingdom of Wessex. . . .

568. Ceawlin and Cutha fought against Æthelberht, and drove him into Kent; and they slew two chiefs Oslaf and Cnebba, at *Wibbandun*.

571. Cuthwulf fought against the British at *Biedcanford*, and took four places *Lygeanburg*,² *Ægelesburg* [Aylesbury], *Banesington* [Bensington] and *Egonesham* [Eynsham], and died the same year.

577. Cuthwine and Ceawlin fought against the Britons, and they slew three kings, Coinmægl and Condidan and Farinmægl, in the place which is called *Deorham* [Dyrham], and took three cities, *Gleawanceaster* [Gloucester], *Cirenceaster* [Cirencester] and *Bathanceaster* [Bath].

584. Ceawlin and Cutha fought against the Britons in the place which is called *Fethanleag*, and Cutha was slain. Ceawlin took many places, and countless booty, and in wrath he returned to his own lands.

592. There was great slaughter at *Wodnesbeorg* [probably near Alton Priors in Wiltshire] and Ceawlin was driven forth.

593. Ceawlin and Cwichelm and Crida perished.

¹ Barbury Camp, near Marlborough, Wilts.

² Probably Limbury, on the Lea, near Luton.

IV. BRITAIN ACCORDING TO PROCOPIUS.

From the *Gothic War*, Book IV, cap. 20 [*Greek*]. See above, p. 68.

Three very populous nations possess the island of Brittia, and there is a king over each of them. And the names of these nations are the Angili, and the Frisians (*Phrissones*), and the Britons (*Brittones*) who have their name from the island. And so numerous are these nations that every year great numbers, with their wives and children, migrate thence to the Franks, and the Franks give them dwellings in that part of their land which seems most bare of men. From which fact they say that they make a claim to the island. So that indeed, not long since, the king of the Franks, when he despatched some of his own people on an embassy to the emperor Justinian at Byzantium, sent with them some men of the Angili, making a display, as if the island also was ruled by him.

V. NORTHERN ENGLAND.

(a) From the *Historia Brittonum*, capp. 61, 62.

The information in the *Historia* is clearly, in part, derived from a Northumbrian regnal list; but it fortunately notes the contemporary doings of the Celtic princes of the North.

Ida the son of Eoppa (*Eobba*) held districts in the north part of Britain, that is beyond the Humber, and reigned twelve years. . . . Adda son of Ida reigned eight years. Æthilric (*Aedlric*) son of Adda¹ reigned four years. Theodric (*Deoric*) son of Ida reigned seven years; Frithuwald (*Friodol-guald*) reigned six years. In whose time the kingdom of Kent received baptism through the mission sent by Gregory.² Hussa reigned seven years; against him fought four kings, Urbgen and Riderch hen,³ and Guallauc and Morcant. Theo-

¹ Æthilric, like the rest of these early kings, was really a son of Ida.

² This seems to date Augustine's mission too early; Æthilfrid must have been reigning in Northumbria when Augustine came to Kent.

³ Adamnan's *Life of Columba* refers to Rydderch (*Roderco filio Tothail qui in Petra Cloithe regnavit*). He therefore reigned in Dumbarton, and was king of Strathclyde. Columba prophesied that he would die in his bed. And he did.

dric (*Deodric*) fought mightily against this Urbgen, with his sons. At that time, sometimes the enemy and sometimes our citizens conquered; and Urbgen shut them up three days and nights in the island of Metcaud.¹ And whilst he was on this campaign he was murdered, from envy, at the instance of Morcant, because in him, beyond all other kings, was the greatest valour in the waging of war.

(b) The *Northumbrian*² *Regnal List*, added to the *Moore MS.* of *Bede's History*.

This list comes down to the 8th year of Ceolwulf (737) and many other indications show it to have been written in that year. It is reproduced in the *Facsimiles of the Palæographical Soc., First Ser., Vol. II., Pt. 2, No. 140.*

In 547 Ida began to reign, from whom has its origin the royal stock of the Northumbrians, and he reigned twelve years. After him Glappa, 1 year; Adda, 8; Æthilric, 4; Theodric, 7; Frithuwald, 6; Hussa, 7; Æthilfrid, 24; Edwin, 18; Oswald, 9; Oswiu, 28; Ecgfrid, 15; Aldfrid, 20; Osred, 11; Coinred, 2; Osric, 11; Ceolwulf, 8.

VI. BEDE'S CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY.

From *Bede's History*, V, 24. (Compiled c. 731.)

547. Ida began to reign, from whom the kingly line of the Northumbrians has its origin; and he reigned twelve years.

565. Columba the priest came from the land of the Scots, [Ireland] to Britain, to teach the Picts, and built a monastery in the island of Hii [Iona].

596. Pope Gregory sent Augustine with monks to Britain to preach the word of God to the English people.

597. The aforesaid teachers arrived in Britain, being the hundred and fiftieth year, more or less, since the coming of the Angles to Britain.

¹ Lindisfarne: for Tigernach records the foundation of the monastery there under the name of *Metgoit*.

² Originally Bernician: Edwin of Deira is an intruder.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEVENTH CENTURY (597-690).

THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND, AND THE GREATNESS OF NORTHUMBRIA.

- I. From the letter of Gregory to Candidus.
- II. Gregory and the English boys, from the *Life of Gregory* by the Whitby monk.
- III. The Mission of Augustine and the victories of Æthilfrid, from Bede's *History*.
- IV. Celtic tradition of the victories of Æthilfrid, from the *Annals* of Tigernach and the *Annales Cambriae*.
- V. Letter of Gregory to Bertha 'queen of the English.'
- VI. Christianity under Æthilberht and his son, from Bede's *History*.
- VII. Extracts from the Laws of Æthilberht.
- VIII. King Edwin and the Conversion of Northumbria, from Bede's *History*.
- IX. Celtic tradition of Edwin, from the *Historia Brittonum*, *Annales Cambriae* and Tigernach.
- X. King Oswald of Northumbria, from Bede's *History*.
- XI. Celtic tradition of Oswald, from Adamnan's *Life of Columba*, the *Historia Brittonum* and the *Annales Cambriae*.
- XII. Oswiu, Oswini and Aidan, from Bede's *History*.
- XIII. Penda of Mercia, from Bede's *History*.
- XIV. Celtic tradition of the death of Penda, from the *Historia Brittonum*, *Annales Cambriae* and Tigernach.
- XV. The Synod of Whitby, from the *Life of Wilfrid* by Eddi.
- XVI. Archbishop Theodore and Chad, from Bede's *History*.
- XVII. The Conversion of the South Saxons by Wilfrid, from Bede's *History*.
- XVIII. The Plague at Jarrow, from the anonymous *History of the Abbots*.

- XIX. The downfall of Northumbria : Battle of Dunnichen Moss (Nechtansmere), from Bede's *History* and Tigernach.
- XX. The battle of Dunnichen Moss revealed to Cuthbert, from the anonymous *Life of S. Cuthbert*.
- XXI. Defeat and pestilence in Northumbria, from Bede's *Life of S. Cuthbert*.
- XXII. From the Laws of Hlothheri and Eadric (Kentish).
- XXIII. Ceadwalla of Wessex goes to Rome ; Death of Archbishop Theodore ; from Bede's *History*.
- XXIV. Death of Ceadwalla and Theodore, from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

OWING to Edwin of Northumbria having wedded the Christian daughter of Æthilbert of Kent, Northumbria was the first of the larger English kingdoms to be converted. The fortunes of Northumbria and of early Christianity in England are therefore in great measure the same ; and there is a curious coincidence in date between the beginning of the period of evangelization and of Northumbrian greatness. Augustine landed in 597, and his success was recognised by Gregory sending him the pallium in 601 ; the foundations of the greater Northumbria, which was to become the champion of Christianity, were laid by the heathen Æthilfrid, who came to the throne in 593, and won his great victory over the Scots in 603, since when, as Bede notes nearly a hundred and thirty years later, no king of the Scots in Britain had dared to attack the English.

There is a similar coincidence in date between the successful completion of the conversion, and the defeat which ends the attempt to unite Britain around an overlord in Northumbria. The missionary period definitely ends with the death of Theodore of Tarsus (690). The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is not quite accurate in saying that all the Archbishops before him had been Roman, for Deusdedit had been an Englishman. But it is right in regarding his death as marking the end of one epoch and the beginning of another ; for Theodore was the last and greatest of the alien Archbishops of Canterbury who founded the English Church. Four years earlier, the conversion of England had been completed when the Northumbrian Wilfrid ended his missionary work in Sussex

(681-86). S. Cuthbert died in 687; and two years before the death of Cuthbert and five before that of Theodore, Northumbrian power had been ended by the defeat and death of Egfrid at Dunnichen Moss (685).

The Venerable Bede, at once a patriotic Northumbrian, and an enthusiastic churchman, easily combines his two loyalties. He records with complacency the slaughter of twelve hundred monks by the great Northumbrian Æthilfrid; they were only Welshmen, and the heathen monarch is clearly the minister of divine vengeance, for Augustine had foretold the slaughter (*Extract III*). Bede's life (c. 673-735) falls just outside this period with which his *History* is specially concerned: he would be a boy of about twelve when the downfall of Dunnichen Moss took place. He has left a brief chronicle of his uneventful life at the end of the *Ecclesiastical History* (see below p. 187). Of his other historical works mention should be made of the *Lives of the Abbots of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow*, the *Life of S. Cuthbert* (see *Extract XXI*) and a short universal Chronicle *On the six ages of the World* (the *Chronica Majora*).

The anonymous originals upon which Bede based his *Lives of the Abbots* and *Life of S. Cuthbert* have survived (see *Extracts XVIII, XX*). So have the *Life of Gregory* by a monk of Whitby (see *Extract II*), and the *Life of S. Wilfrid* by Eddi (see *Extract XV*). But Bede is not dependent upon these sources, even when he is following them. He knew Wilfrid personally. (Curiously, though he records many miracles of the great people of the preceding age, he omits all but one of the numerous miracles of Wilfrid recorded by Eddi.)

Bede's reference to those who reckoned the times of the kings, but refused to count the two shortlived predecessors of Oswald (see *Extract X*), may point to some lost *Annals* of the Northumbrian kings. The very excellence of Bede's *History* must have tended to cause the loss of the sources which he used, but which no one would think worth copying after his

fuller *History* had appeared. The wonder is that so much has survived from the period anterior to Bede's *History*.

The *Historia Brittonum* contains, from the end of section 61 to section 65, a brief history of Northern England from Ida to Ecgfrid, in which, however, it is stated that Ecgfrid reigned *nine* years (instead of fifteen). It has therefore been argued that this brief history was written after Ecgfrid had reigned nine years, in 679. In that case the reference to the death of Ecgfrid (685), and the somewhat later death of S. Cuthbert (687) would be subsequent interpolations. In any case, as no later events than these are recorded in it, this portion of the *Historia Brittonum* is probably not to be placed after the end of the Seventh Century. It may well be the work of some Celtic subject of the Northumbrian overlords. But it seems to have been unknown to Bede, and it supplements his narrative with some scraps of information from the Celtic point of view. So, but to an even smaller extent, do the *Annales Cambriae* (late Tenth Century, see above, p. 71), and the *Annals of Tigernach* (who died in 1088). Where any of these throw any light upon Bede's narrative, they are quoted after the appropriate chapters of the *History* (see below, *Extracts IV, IX, XI, XIV*). The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* preserves a few facts relating to Southern England which Bede had ignored, as outside the scope of his *History* (*Extract XXIV*).

One or two letters of Gregory the Great, which escaped Bede's search, have a bearing upon the Conversion of England (*Extracts I, V*).

I. GREGORY TO THE PRIEST CANDIDUS, GOING INTO GAUL.

From the letters of Gregory in *Mon. Germ. Hist. (Epist., vol. I, ed. Ewald and Hartmann, p. 388 : Book vi., letter 10 : Sept., 595)*.

. . . We wish you to buy clothing for the poor, or English boys of the age of seventeen and eighteen, that they may be dedicated to the service of God, and educated in monasteries. . . .

II. GREGORY AND THE ENGLISH BOYS.

From the *Life of S. Gregory* by a monk of Whitby.

This *Life* is earlier than Bede. It was probably written about 713, and is very possibly the source of Bede's version of the story. Note, however, that the monk of Whitby does not say that the boys were slaves. The *Life* has been edited from the unique manuscript (*S. Gallen*, 567) by Abbot F. A. Gasquet (1904).

And it is not in any wise to be left untold how devoutly, and with what incomparable discernment, both of heart and eyes, he provided for our conversion to God. For it is told among the faithful how (before the time of his pontificate, of which I have just spoken) there came to Rome certain of our nation, with fair face and hair. When he heard that they had come, he at once wished to see them. . . . He asked them what was their race. (Some say that they were beautiful boys, some that they were youths curly headed and goodly.) And when they replied, 'Those of whom we come are called Angles,' he said 'Angels of God.' Next he asked, 'How is the king of that nation called?' And they replied, 'Aelli.' And he said, 'Alleluia, for there ought the praise of the Lord to be.' Also he asked the name of the tribe from which they were sprung. And they said 'Deira.' And he said '*De ira Dei*, from the wrath of God, fleeing to the faith.'

. . . So he begged his predecessor in the pontificate, Benedict [574-78], not to resist the urgency of his prayer, saying that it was a wretched thing that Hell should be stored with such beautiful vessels. In answer to this, and similar requests, the Pope gave him permission to journey hither. But this permission gave great sorrow to the Roman people. They are said to have planned to divide themselves into three parts, along the road by which the Pope went to the church of S. Peter. And, as he passed, each section shouted to him thus: 'Thou hast offended Peter: thou hast destroyed Rome: thou hast dismissed Gregory.' He, therefore, thrice hearing so terrible a saying, sent messengers promptly and caused Gregory to return.

III. THE MISSION OF AUGUSTINE AND THE VICTORIES OF ÆTHILFRID.

From Bede's *History*, I, 23-II, 2.

The year of the incarnation of our Lord 582, Mauricius the fifty-fourth emperor after Augustus reigned Emperor of Rome twenty-one years. The tenth year of whose reign, Gregory, being a man of the greatest virtue and learning of his time, was then bishop of the Roman and Apostolic see, which he governed thirteen years, six months, ten days. Which the fourteenth year of the reign of the said emperor, and about the hundred and fiftieth year of the Englishmen's coming into Britain, being moved by inspiration of God thereunto, sent the servant of God, S. Augustine, and certain other monks which feared God with him, to preach the word of God unto the nation of the Englishmen. Which obeying the bishop's commandment, when they began to take the said enterprise in hand, and had already travelled part of the way, seized with fear, they bethought themselves it should be better for them to return home again than to go unto that barbarous and savage country, whose language they knew not. And thus by common assent they determined to do, as being safer. Whereupon they send Augustine back again to the Pope (whom the Pope had appointed to be bishop there, if they were received of the Englishmen) humbly to require him that they might not go forward in that so uncertain, so perilous and painful peregrination. Whom Gregory yet exhorted by letters, that putting their trust in the help of God, they should proceed in their good purpose, of the which letters this is the copy: '*Gregory the servant of the servants of God*, etc. For so much as better it were never to begin a good work, than after it is once begun to go from it again, you must needs (my dear sons) now fulfil the good work which by the help of God you have taken in hand. . . .'

(24) He sent also at the same time letters unto Etherius, archbishop of Arles¹, that he should favourably entertain

¹ Really, bishop of Lyons: see below, p. 110, footnote.

Augustine going into Britain, of the which letters this is the tenor: ' . . . We thought it good to direct our letters to your brotherhood: advertising you that we have sent Augustine, the bearer hereof, with other servants of God accompanying him, for the health of souls: whom it behoveth your holiness to help and comfort with priestly care. And to the intent you may be the better willing so to do, I have willed him to discover unto you the cause of his journey. . . . '

(25) Augustine, being much encouraged with the comfort of S. Gregory, returned to preach the word of God with the servants of Christ which were with him, and came into Britain. Æthilberht at that time was king of Kent, a man of great puissance, having enlarged the frontiers of his empire as far as the great river Humber, by the which the South and North English are divided. At the east end of Kent there is the Isle of Thanet, containing 600 families [= hides] according to the English way of reckoning, which island is parted from the land by the river Wantsum, which is of three furlongs breadth and in two places only passable, for both the heads of him run into the sea. In that island was Augustine set on land, and his fellows, to the number of almost forty persons. They took with them certain Franks, to be their interpreters, according as Gregory had commanded. And sending unto the king Æthilberht, they sent him word that they came from Rome, and that they brought him very good tidings, that is to wit, that such as should follow and obey their doctrine, should enjoy an everlasting kingdom in heaven with the true and living God. Which hearing this, commanded that they should tarry in the said island, having all things necessary ministered unto them, until they should hear further of his pleasure. For the bruit of the Christian religion had come before unto him, since he had wedded a Christian woman of the royal house of the Franks named Bertha, whom he married with these conditions taken of her parents, that it should be lawful for her to keep unbroken the rites of her faith and religion, with her bishop, Liudhard by name, whom they appointed her, to assist and help her in matters of her faith.

Within few days hereof the king came unto the island : and sitting under the open sky, he bade Augustine with his fellows to come to commune with him. He would not suffer him to come unto him into any house, lest if they were skilful in sorcery they might the rather deceive him and prevail against him. But they came not armed with the force of the devil, but endued with the strength of God, carrying before them in place of a banner a cross of silver, and the image of our Saviour painted on a panel ; and, singing the litanies, prayed both for themselves and also for them to whom, and for whose sake, they came thither. And when they, sitting down as the king did bid them, preached unto him the word of life, and also to all his household there present, he answered them saying : ‘ You give us very fair words and promises : but yet for that they are strange and unknown unto me, I cannot rashly assent unto them, forsaking that ancient religion which this long time both I and all Englishmen have observed. But forasmuch as you are come so far, to the intent you might impart unto us such knowledge as you take to be right true and good, we will not seek your trouble, but rather with all courtesy receive you and minister you such things as are behoveful for your livelihood. Neither do we hinder you from winning unto your profession with your preaching as many as you can.’ He allowed them therefore a lodging in the city of Canterbury, which was the head city of his dominion, and, as he promised, provided them of necessaries, and freely licensed them to preach. . . .

(26) After they were now entered into their lodging, they began to express the very apostolic order of living of the primitive church, serving God in continual prayer, watching and fasting, and preaching the word of life to as many as they could, despising the commodities of the world as things none of their own. . . .

There was near the east end of the city an ancient church built in the honour of S. Martin, made while the Romans were yet dwelling in England, in the which the queen (which as we have said was a Christian woman) did use commonly

to pray. They also resorted commonly to the said church, and began there first to sing service, pray, say mass, preach, and christen, until such time as the king being converted unto the faith, they received more ample licence to preach where they would, and either to build new or repair old churches. But when the king himself, being much delighted with the purity of their life, and the example of their godly conversation, as also with their sweet promises (which to be true they proved by the working of many miracles) did believe and was baptised, there began more and more daily to resort unto their sermons, and, renouncing the rites of their old paganism, to join themselves by the faith to the unity of the holy church of Christ. Of whose faith and conversion though the king much rejoiced, yet he would force none to become Christian, but only showed himself in outward appearance more friendly unto the faithful, as companions of one kingdom of heaven with him. For he had learned of these his masters, that the service of Christ must be voluntary and not forced. . . .

(27) After this the servant of God Augustine came to Arles, where of Etherius, archbishop of the said city,¹ he was created archbishop of the nation of the Englishmen, according as S. Gregory the Pope had commanded. And returning unto Britain, he sent forthwith Laurence the priest and Peter the monk unto Rome, which should make relation unto S. Gregory, how that the Englishmen had received the faith and he been made their bishop. . . .

(29) Farthermore the said Pope Gregory (forasmuch as Augustine had advertised him that there was a great harvest and few workmen) sent him with his said legates more preachers, of which the chiefest were Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus and Rufinianus. And by them also he sent all such things which were necessary for the furniture and ministry of the church: as holy vessels, altar-cloths, orna-

¹ Bede is wrong in making Etherius archbishop of Arles: he was bishop of Lyons. Augustine *was* consecrated by the archbishop of Arles, but his name was Vergilius.

ments for the churches: apparel also for the priests and clergy: also relics of the holy apostles and martyrs, and many books. He sent him also letters, by the which he signified unto him that he had sent him a pallium, and instructed him what order he should keep in making of bishops in the country of Britain: of which letters this is the tenor: ‘. . . Forasmuch as by the goodness of God and your travail the new church of the English people is brought unto the faith and grace of Christ, we grant unto you the use of the pallium, to wear such times only as you say mass: and we licence you to ordain twelve bishops in such places as be under your jurisdiction: but so that the bishop of London be ever hereafter consecrated of his own synod, and receive his pallium of this holy and apostolic see, wherein I by the grace of God do now serve. Also we will that you send a bishop to the city of York, whom you shall think worthy of that prelacy; yet so, that if that city with the country about receiveth the word of God, the said bishop be authorised to make twelve bishops more, and he himself be their metropolitan. For we intend to give him also a pallium, by the grace of God, if we live. . . .’

(30) *‘To his most beloved son, the Abbot Mellitus. . . .’*
When then God shall bring you unto our reverend brother bishop Augustine, tell him what I have, after long consideration, devised with myself of the cause of the Englishmen. That is, to wit, that not the temples of the idols, but the idols which be in them, be broken; that water be blessed, and sprinkled about the same temples, altars builded, relics placed. For if the said churches be well made, it is needful that they be altered from the worshipping of devils into the service of God, that whiles the people do not see their temples spoiled, they may (forsaking their error) be moved the more oft to haunt their wonted place to the honour and service of God. And for that they are wont to kill oxen in sacrifice to the devils, they shall use the same slaughter now, but changed to a better purpose. It may therefore be permitted them, that in the dedication day or solemn days of martyrs whose

relics are there placed, they make them bowers about their churches, and feasting together after a good religious sort, kill their oxen now to the refreshing of themselves, and to the praise of God, which before they were wont to offer up in sacrifice to the devils: that whiles some outward comforts are reserved unto them, they may thereby be brought the rather to the inward comforts of grace in God. For it is doubtless impossible from men, being so rooted in evil customs, to cut off all their abuses upon the sudden. He that laboureth to climb up unto a high place, he goeth upward by steps, not by leaps. . . .

(32) The said holy Pope Gregory at the selfsame time sent unto king Æthilberht a letter with rich presents of diverse sorts. ‘. . . Our right reverend brother bishop Augustine, being brought up in the monastic rule, having good knowledge in the holy scriptures, and a man through the grace of God of much virtue, whatsoever he shall advertise you to do, gladly hear it, devoutly do it, diligently remember it. . . . We will also your highness to know that (according as we are taught in the holy scriptures by the very words of God) the end of this world draweth onward, and the kingdom of the saints of God shall follow, which never shall have end. And the end of the world approaching, many things shall fall upon us, which have not been heard of before, that is to wit, change of the air, terrible sights from heaven, tempests contrary to the order of the times, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes. All which shall not yet fall in our days. Wherefore if you shall know any of these to happen in your land, let not your mind be dismayed therewith. For therefore shall there be signs sent before the end of the world, to the intent we should the more diligently tender the health of our souls, live ever in doubt and fear of death, ready prepared by good works for the coming of Christ our Judge. . . .

‘I have sent you small presents, which yet shall not seem small unto you, if you shall accept them as hallowed with the blessing of S. Peter. Almighty God make perfect in you his grace according as he hath begun, and send you both long life

here upon the earth and, that ended, eternal life in his kingdom of heaven.'

(34) About this time Æthilfrid, a man very valiant and much desirous of renown, was king of Northumbria; one that more wasted the land of the Britons than any of the English princes. So that it seemed he might be compared unto Saul, king of the Israelites, save only in that he was void and ignorant of God's religion. For none of all the aldormen, none of all the kings, did conquer more of the land of the Britons, either making them tributary, or driving them clean out of the country and planting the English in their places, than did this Æthilfrid. . . . Whereby Ædan, king of the Scots who inhabit Britain, much grudging to see him go forward after this sort, assembled a main and a strong army against him; yet, being conquered, fled away with but few. For in that famous place which is called *Degsastan* almost all the army of Ædan was slain. In which field Theodbald, brother to Æthilfrid, was also slain with that part of the army whereof he was general. This battle was fought in the year of our Lord 603, and the eleventh year of the reign of Æthilfrid, which lasted twenty-four years, and the first year of the reign of Phocas, then emperor of Rome. From that time forward unto this present, never was there king of the Scots in Britain, which durst meet the Englishmen in the field.

. . . (II, 2) About this time Augustine by the aid and help of king Æthilberht called together the bishops and doctors of the province of the Britons nearest to him, to commune with them, into a place which until this day is called *Augustinae Ac*, that is, Augustine's Oak, being in the borders of the Hwicci and West Saxons. . . . [A second conference is arranged.]

Which when it was appointed to be so, there came, as it is reported, seven British bishops, and many other well-learned men, specially out of their greatest monastery at Bangor, where at that time Dinoot was abbot. These men being now ready to go to the foresaid synod, came first to a certain holy and wise man (which lived thereabout an

anchorite's life) to ask his counsel, whether they ought at Augustine's preaching and exhortation to leave their traditions, or no. Who answered them : ' If he be a man of God, follow him.' ' But how shall we prove,' said they, ' that he is a man of God ?' The anchorite answered : ' Our Lord saith, *Take on you my yoke, and learn of me. For I am mild and humble of heart.* If therefore this Augustine be mild and humble of heart, it is likely that he himself beareth the yoke of Christ and will offer you the same to bear. But if he be curst and proud, it is certain that he is not of God, neither must we much esteem his words.' Then they enquired again of him, how they might know whether this Augustine were proud or no. ' Marry,' quoth he, ' provide ye that he with his company come first to the place of the synod. And if when ye approach near, he ariseth courteously to you, think ye that he is the servant of Christ, and so hear ye him obediently. But if he despise you, nor will vouchsafe to rise at your presence, which are the more in number, let him likewise be despised of you.' And truly as this anchorite bade them, so did they. For it happened that, when they came thither, S. Augustine was already there, and sat in his chair. Which when they saw, straightway waxing wroth, they noted him of pride, and therefore endeavoured to overthwart and gainsay whatsoever he proposed. . . . To whom the good man of God, S. Augustine, threatfully prophesied, that, if they would not take peace and be at accord with their brethren, they should receive and feel war from their enemies.

. . . Which thing in all points came so to pass as he fore-said, by the secret working of God's judgment. For it happened afterwards that the most mighty king of Englishmen, Æthilfrid, of whom I have spoken before, gathering a great army, made a foul slaughter of this unfaithful and naughty people, at the City of the Legions, which the Englishmen call Chester [*Lega-Cæster*], but the Britons better *Car-Legion*. For being now ready to give the onset of the fight, when he had spied their priests (which came together to pray to God for the soldiers warring) stand apart from the

rest in a sure and safe place, he demanded what they were, and to what end they came thither. Now the most part of these priests were of the monastery of Bangor; where was said to be so great a number of monks, that this monastery being divided into seven companies, with each company his several assigned ruler, none of these companies had less than 300 persons, who all did ever live by the labour of their own hands. Many therefore of them after their three days' fast came with the rest to the aforesaid army to pray for the soldiers: having also by them a defender named Brocmail, who should keep and preserve them from the weapons and strokes of their enemies, while they were thus earnestly bent to their prayers. When king Æthilfrid had understood this, the cause of their coming thither, he said: 'If these men cry and call upon their God against us, truly, although they have no armour, yet they fight against us, who with their wicked words and hateful curses persecute us.' Therefore he commanded his soldiers first to assault them, and afterwards vanquished the other part of this detestable host; but yet not without great loss of his own men. It is reported that there were slain in that war, of them which came to pray, about 1200 men, and only 50 to have escaped by flight. For Brocmail, at the first coming of his enemies, fled straight with all his soldiers, and left those whom he ought to have defended all naked and bare to the strokes of the sword. So in this manner was fulfilled the prophecy of holy bishop Augustine, albeit he himself, long before that, had been taken out of this life to the kingdom of heaven. And thus these ungracious and false people suffered the punishment of temporal death, because they had refused and despised the wholesome counsel of perpetual life and salvation offered them.

IV. CELTIC TRADITION OF THE VICTORIES OF ÆTHILFRID.

From the *Annals* of Tigernach.

Tigernach puts the battle of Degsastan three years too early, as Bede's chronology shows: the same is probably the case with his

date for the battle of Chester, and certainly so if Tigernach is correct in placing that battle immediately before the death of Æthilfrid. He confuses the brother of Æthilfrid, who fell at Degsastan, with his son Eanfrid. Tigernach's mention of Maeluma mac Baedain shows that Ædan brought over allied Scots from Ulster.

[600.] Battle of Ædan with the Saxons, where Eanfraith brother of Æthilfrid (*Etalfraich*) was killed by Maeluma son of Baedain, in which he [Maeluma or Ædan] was defeated.

[613.] Battle of Caire Legion, in which the saints were slain, and there fell Solon, son of Conain, king of the Britons, and king Cetula. Æthilfrid (*Etalfraidh*) was victor, and immediately afterwards he died.

From the *Annales Cambriae*.

[613.] Battle of Cair Legion, and there fell Selim, son of Cinan.

V. LETTER OF GREGORY TO BERTHA, 'QUEEN OF THE ENGLISH.'

From the letters of Gregory in *Mon. Germ. Hist. (Epist., Vol. II, ed. Hartmann, p. 304 : Bk. xi., letter 35 : June, 601).*

He who at the end of earthly power wishes to attain the glory of the heavenly kingdom must work the more zealously for the sake of his Creator . . . as we rejoice that you have done. For our beloved son the priest Laurence, and Peter the Monk, have returned to Rome and have told us of the favour and comfort which you have bestowed upon Augustine, our reverend brother and fellow bishop. [He compares her to S. Helena, the mother of Constantine, and urges her to influence her husband], that for the salvation of his kingdom and his own soul, he may pursue the faith which you follow, so that from and through him a reward in the joy of Heaven may accrue to you for the conversion of the whole nation. For since, as I have said, you are fortified in the faith and instructed in letters, this should be neither a slow nor a difficult matter for you. Since God is willing, and the time is ripe, act, so that, with the help of the divine grace, you may retrieve with increase what has been neglected. . . .

VI. CHRISTIANITY UNDER ÆTHILBERHT AND HIS SON.

Bede's History, II, 3-6.

In the year of the incarnation of our Lord 604, Augustine, archbishop of Britain, consecrated two bishops, Mellitus and Justus: the one, that is Mellitus, to preach to the province of the East Saxons, which are separated from Kent by the Thames and are fast joined to the east sea, whose chief city is London, of situation near set upon the banks of the river called the Thames, a princely mart-town of many people arriving thither by sea and land. In the which country at that time reigned Saberht (Æthilberht's nephew by his sister Ricula), although this Saberht was himself under the dominion of the same Æthilberht, who was (as I have before said) king over all the Englishmen, even unto the boundary of the river Humber.

Now as soon as this province by the preaching of Mellitus had received the word of truth, king Æthilberht builded in the city of London S. Paul's church, where Mellitus and his successors ever after should have their bishop's see. The other, which was Justus, Augustine ordained bishop in Kent, in a city which the Englishmen called Rochester. . . .

After this the holy father Augustine, the man dearly beloved by God, died, and his body was laid by the church of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul (of which church I have made mention before), without the door thereof, because it was not yet finished nor dedicated. But as soon as the church was dedicated, his body was brought in, and decently buried in the north porch of the same church; where also were interred the bodies of all the archbishops following, except two only, that is Theodore and Berhtwald, whose bodies were laid in the church itself, because the porch could receive no more. . . .

(4) After the death of S. Augustine, Laurence succeeded in the bishopric, whom S. Augustine himself while he lived had ordained thereto, lest that, after he was dead, the state of this church, rude as yet and lately converted, might begin to waver and fall, if it should have lacked a pastor and ruler never so little while. . . .

(5) In the year of the incarnation of our Lord 616 (which was the twenty-first after that bishop Augustine and his company were sent to the English nation to preach) Æthilberht, king of Kent, after his temporal reign, which he had kept most gloriously the space of fifty-six years, entered into eternal bliss of the kingdom of heaven; who was the third king of the Englishmen that reigned over all the south provinces, which are separated from the north by the river Humber. (But he was the first of all the kings that entered into the kingdom of heaven.) For the first English king to have such rule was Ælli, king of the South Saxons, the second Cælin, king of the West Saxons, whom they called Ceawlin in their tongue. The third, as we have said, was Æthilberht, king of Kent. After him the fourth was Redwald, king of the East Angles, who while king Æthilberht yet lived was gaining the leadership for that same race of his. The fifth was Edwin, king of Northumbria. This king, being a prince of greater power than all other that ruled in Britain, reigned both over the Englishmen and Britons too, except the people of Kent; and added moreover to the English dominions the British islands called Mevaniæ [Anglesey and Man] which lie betwixt Ireland and Britain. The sixth was Oswald, king also of Northumbria, a most Christian prince, whose dominions were as large. The seventh was Oswiu his brother, keeping the kingdom almost within equal bounds for a certain time; but after, he conquered for the most part the Picts and Scotsmen which dwelled in the north quarters of Britain, and made them tributary. But we will speak of that hereafter.

King Æthilberht died the twenty-fourth day of February, the twenty-first year after that he had received the faith being full passed, and is laid in S. Martin's porch, within the church of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, where also queen Bertha is buried. Which king beside other benefits that he bountifully bestowed upon his subjects, gave and appointed them by the counsel of wise men certain laws and judicial decrees according to the example of the Romans:

which being written in the English tongue are until this day kept of them and, as occasion serveth, practised. In which his laws and decrees he first and chiefly ordained what amends he ought to make which had by theft taken away any thing from the church, bishop, or other orders. Wherein the king provided a safeguard and surety for them, whom and whose doctrine he had now received.

This Æthilberht was the son of Irminric, whose father was Octa, and Octa's father Oeric, called also Oisc, from whom the kings of Kent are wont to be called Oiscingas. This Oeric's father's name was Hengist, who with his son Oisc, being sent for by Vortigern, [*a Vurtigerno*] first entered into Britain, as I have showed before.

But after the death of Æthilberht, when Eadbald his son had taken on him the rule of the realm, he greatly hindered and damaged the young springs and tender increases of the Church. For he would not only not accept and maintain the faith of Christ, but he was also polluted and defiled with such a fornication as the Apostle witnesseth never to have been heard of among the Gentiles, which is, that he had married his father's wife. With which two heinous crimes he gave occasion to his subjects to return to their former filth, which under his father's reign, either for favour or fear of the king, had yielded to the laws of Christian faith and chastity. But the scourges of God and vengeance from heaven wanted not, to the punishing and correcting of this unfaithful king. For he was plagued with often frenzy of mind and raging fury of an unclean spirit.

The death also of Saberht, king of the East Saxons, much increased the trouble and persecution of the Church; who, departing hence to the everlasting kingdom of heaven, left his three sons, remaining yet paynims, heirs of his temporal kingdom in earth. After the death of their father, they began straightway and openly to follow idolatry, which, while their father lived, they seemed somewhat to have abandoned; giving also free license to all their subjects to worship idols. These princes on a certain time when they saw the bishop in

the church, after he had celebrated the solemnities of the mass, give the people the sacrament, being puffed up with barbarous and rude folly, said (as the common report is) thus unto him: 'Why dost thou not give us also some of that white bread, which thou didst give our father Saba' (for so they were wont to call their father Saberht) 'and which thou dost not yet cease to give the people in the church?' To whom he answered: 'If ye will be washed in that wholesome font wherein your father was, ye may likewise eat of this blessed bread whereof he was partaker. But if ye contemn the laver of life, ye can in no wise taste the bread of life.' 'We will not,' said they, 'enter into this font of water, for we know not of any need thereof. But yet nevertheless we will eat of that bread.' And when they had been often and earnestly warned of the bishop that it could not be that without holy purging and cleansing by baptism any man might communicate of this most holy oblation, they at last in their fury and rage said to the bishop: 'Well, if thou wilt not consent to us in so small a matter as we ask of thee, thou shalt not henceforth abide in our province and dominions.' And straightway they expelled him, commanding him and all his company to depart their realm. Who, being expelled thence, went into Kent, to commune there with Laurence and Justus his fellow bishops, what were best to be done in this case. And by common consent it was concluded that better it were for them all to return into their countries, and there to serve God with a free mind and quiet conscience, than to abide with those barbarous men, or live amongst such rebels of the faith, without all fruit or profit. Therefore Mellitus and Justus departed first and came to the coasts of Gaul, purposing there to expect and attend for the issue of these matters. But not for long did these kings, which had driven from them this preacher of truth, practise freely idolatry and worshipping of devils. For on a time, waging battle against the Gewissi,¹ they, with their whole army, were slain. But although the authors of this mischief were thus

¹ A name of the West Saxons.

destroyed, yet could not the common people, once stirred to naughtiness, be amended and revoked to the simplicity of faith and charity which is in Christ.

(6) When Laurence was now ready to forsake Britain and go after Mellitus and Justus, he commanded, the night before he went, his bed to be brought forth and laid in S. Peter and Paul's church, of which church we have oftentimes spoken. Where, after many prayers and tears poured out to God for the state of the Church, reposing his body to rest and sleeping in his bed, the blessed apostle S. Peter appeared to him : who, scourging him with sharp stripes, a great while, in the close and secret night, challenged him with apostolical authority, and asked why he would forsake the flock which he himself had committed unto him, and to what shepherd, thus running now away, he would leave the sheep of Christ beset in the midst of wolves. 'Hast thou,' quoth he, 'forgot mine example, who for the little ones of Christ, which he commended to me in witness and token of his love, did suffer fetters, stripes, imprisonings, afflictions, and at the last death itself, yea, the death of the cross, by infidels and the enemies of Christ, that I might be crowned with him?' By these S. Peter's stripes and with these his exhortations Laurence, the servant of Christ, being stirred up and encouraged, came boldly to the king early in the morning, and loosing his garment showed him how sore he was beaten and pitifully his flesh was torn. The king, amazed thereat, marvelled much with himself, and enquired who durst be so bold as to whip and scourge such a man as this Laurence was. But as soon as he had heard that for his own health's sake and salvation this bishop had suffered so grievous beatings, yea, and that by the apostle of Christ, he feared much. And afterward abandoning all worship and honour of idols, renouncing also his unlawful marriage, he embraced the faith of Christ; and being baptised, he endeavoured to keep and maintain the state of the Church in all points to his uttermost power. Moreover he sent unto Gaul and called home Mellitus and Justus, commanding them to return to

their churches and freely instruct their flock. Thus the year after their departure they returned again, Justus to Rochester, where he was bishop; but as for Mellitus, the Londoners would not receive him although he was their bishop, choosing rather to obey idolatrous priests than him. And truly king Eadbald was not a prince of so great power and strength as was his father, that he might restore this bishop to his church, notwithstanding the paynim Londoners' resistance.

VII. FROM THE LAWS OF ÆTHILBERHT.

Liebermann, I, 3, etc.: Attenborough, 4, etc.

The statement of William of Malmesbury that the Laws of Æthilberht 'left nothing ambiguous on any matter' is evidence that William had not studied them carefully. The laws are not a code: they are 'brief amending clauses, dealing only with certain sides of the law, more particularly with the penalties for important crimes, and with the status of the clergy' (Corbett in *Cambridge Mediæval History*, II, 562). Behind this written law was a body of customary law which is assumed to be known: without it, the written Dooms of Æthilberht must necessarily appear obscure. For example the 'ordinary' *wergeld*, the price of the life of the yeoman or 'churl,' is given at 100 shillings (say 100 oxen): we do not get the price of the life of the 'earl' (i.e. squire) stated till we come to the Laws of Hlothheri (*Extract XXII*, below) and then only incidentally.

Though written down in English in the early Seventh Century, these Laws are extant only in a transcript of the early Twelfth Century.

These are the dooms which king Æthilberht established in Augustine's day.

1.¹ [Theft of] God's property and church property [shall be atoned for] twelve-fold: a bishop's, eleven-fold: a priest's, nine-fold: a deacon's, six-fold: a clerk's, three-fold. Breach of church-peace or of the peace of the place of assembly, two-fold.

2. If the king call his liege men to him, and anyone do

¹ The different decrees are not numbered in the manuscript.

harm to them there, he shall make atonement two-fold, and 50 shillings¹ to the king.

3. If the king be drinking at a man's house, and a man do ought wrong there, he shall make atonement two-fold.

4. If a freeman rob the king, he shall make atonement nine-fold.

5. If a man slay a man on the royal demesne, he shall make atonement 50 shillings.

6. If a man slay a freeman, 50 shillings to the king for infraction of his right as lord. . . .

21. If a man slay a man, the ordinary wergeld is 100 shillings.

22. If a man slay a man, he shall pay 20 shillings at the open grave, and the whole wergeld within forty nights.

23. If a man-slayer flee the country, his kinsfolk shall pay half the wergeld.

24. If a man lay bonds upon a freeman, he shall make atonement 20 shillings. . . .

25. If a man slay the 'loaf-eater' [servant] of a 'churl' [yeoman], he shall make atonement [to the 'churl'] 6 shillings.

26. If he slay a *lat*² of the best class, he shall make atonement 80 shillings: of the second class, 60 shillings: of the third class, 40 shillings. . . .

[33-72 deal with compensation for damage to different portions of the body, presumably calculated on the body of the 'ordinary churl,' thus :

51. For the four front teeth, each 6 shillings: the tooth which stands next, 4 shillings, that then which stands next, 3 shillings: then a shilling each.

57. If a man strike another with his fist on the nose, 3 shillings.

¹ The Kentish shilling was reckoned as equal to 20 sceattas or pence, and was probably the price of an ox. It must be carefully distinguished from the Mercian shilling of fourpence. The West-Saxon shilling seems originally to have been identical with the Mercian. See Chadwick, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Institutions*, pp. 51-61.

² The term *lat* is found only in the Kentish laws: it signifies a class intermediate between the free 'churl' or yeoman, and the slave.

58. If there be a bruise, a shilling.]

86. If one servant slay another who is guiltless, he shall pay his full value. . . .

90. If a slave steal, he shall make atonement two-fold.

VIII. KING EDWIN (617-633) AND THE CONVERSION OF NORTHUMBRIA.

From Bede's *History*, II, 9-20.

The Idle was fouled with Angles' blood.

Fragment preserved by Henry of Huntingdon.

About this time the people also of Northumbria received together with their king Edwin the word of faith by the preaching of Paulinus. . . .

Now the occasion that these peoples came to the faith was such: the before-named king Edwin was joined in affinity to the king of Kent by the marriage of Lady Æthilberg, otherwise called Tata, daughter to king Æthilberht. Which lady when king Edwin wooed, sending thither his ambassadors, answer was given by her brother Eadbald, then king of Kent, that it was not lawful for a Christian virgin to be married or spoused to a paynim, lest the faith and sacrament of the King of Heaven might be profaned by the company of such a king as knew not the true worshipping of God. Which answer when the ambassadors brought back to king Edwin, he promised that in any case he would do nothing that should be contrary to the Christian faith which this virgin possessed, but rather permit that she, with all the men and women, priests or servants, which came with her, should keep and observe after the Christian's manner their faith and customs of their religion. Neither did he deny but that himself also would receive the same religion, provided that after the examination of wise men it were found more holy than his, and meeter for God. Then upon these conditions this virgin was promised, and sent also unto king Edwin. And according to appointment made, the man of God Paulinus was ordained bishop and chosen to go with her, to confirm

her and her company, that they might not be polluted by the fellowship of paynims. Who did so, by his daily exhortations, and ministering the blessed sacrament unto them. This Paulinus was made bishop by Justus, the archbishop of Canterbury, about the 12th of the Kalends of August, the year of our Lord 625. Being ordained, he was directed in company with the above-mentioned virgin unto king Edwin, as a companion of their union in the flesh. But the virtuous bishop intended wholly in his heart nought else than to call that country to which he went to the acknowledging of the truth, that he might present it, as a chaste virgin, to the true and only spouse, which is Christ. . . .

The year following there came into that country a desperate ruffian named Eumer, sent thither by Cwichelm, king of the West Saxons. Who intending to dispatch king Edwin, both from his kingdom and life too, brought a double-edged short sword, to this intent dipped in poison, that if the stroke of the sword were not forcible enough to kill the king out of hand, yet it might be helped forward with the infection of the poison. He came therefore on Easter Sunday to the king, near the river Derwent, where he then lay. He entered there as an ambassador which had an earnest message from his prince, and when with crafty speech he had a little made the prince attentive to his feigned embassy, he steppeth forth suddenly, and drawing his sword from under his garment, flew to the king. Which when Lilla the king's most faithful thane saw, having no buckler ready at hand wherewith he might defend the king from present death, he stepped straightway with his own body between the king and the stroke. But this murderer struck his sword so far and fiercely in them both, that through the body of this thane he wounded the king himself grievously. Which thing when he had thus done, being straightway beset with the weapons of the king's thanes, even in that tumult too, with the same bloody sword he slew another, whose name was Forthheri.

Now it happened that the same holy night of Easter Sunday, the queen was delivered of a daughter, whose name was

Eanfled. For the which child, when the king in presence of the bishop Paulinus gave thanks to his gods, the bishop contrariwise began to praise and give thanks to our Lord Christ; and said to the king certainly, that he had obtained by his prayers of Christ that the queen might be delivered safely and without great grief. With which his words the king being much delighted, promised that he would renounce all idols and ever after serve Christ, if so be that Christ would now grant him his life and health and victory also in his wars which he purposed to have against this king Cwichelm, who had sent in such sort this ruffian and manqueller that had wounded him. And, in pledge of performing this his promise, he assigned and granted to bishop Paulinus this his daughter to be christened, who was baptised first of all the Northumbrians, with eleven other of the king's household, upon Whitsunday following. At which time the king also, being recovered of his wound that he had lately taken, made an army and marched forth against the West Saxons, at the which battle he slew or else took prisoners all them whom he understood to have conspired to his death. So returning home to his country victor and conqueror, yet would he not without further counsel receive the Christian faith; although truly he worshipped not idols from that day that he promised he would serve Christ. But he sought ever after, diligently, of the right reverend father Paulinus the reason of faith, and conferred with his aldormen and nobles, whom he knew to be wisest, what were best, as they thought, to be done in these matters. And moreover (as he was by nature a very wise man) sitting oftentimes alone for a great space, in much silence of outward voice but in his inward thought communing with himself, he discussed and debated in his mind diversely what he should do in this case, and what religion were best to be followed.

(10) And behold, in the midst of these cogitations, he happily received from Boniface, Bishop of the See Apostolic, letters exhorting him to the faith. The copy of which is such: [The text of the letter follows, concluding] 'And here we have

sent you the blessing of S. Peter, head of the apostles and your good guide and governor: that is, a shirt laid with gold and a cloak of the sort we have from Ancyra, which we beseech your highness to accept with so good a heart and will as ye understand it is sent from us.'

(11) This bishop sent also letters to the queen. ' . . . In the meantime we have here sent you the blessing of S. Peter, your patron, and head of the apostles: that is, a looking-glass of silver, and a comb of ivory gilded with gold, which we pray your highness with as goodwill to accept as ye understand it is sent from us.'

(12) Thus much did Pope Boniface by his letters for the converting of king Edwin and all his country; which king was also well holpen to receive the faith and mark diligently the wholesome precepts of Christian doctrine by an oracle and vision from heaven, which the goodness of God had vouchsafed to show him aforetime, while he lay banished in king Redwald's court, king of the East Angles. . . . Now was this vision such as followeth:

At what time king Æthilfrid, Edwin's predecessor, with grievous pursuing, put Edwin to flight, and made him lie privy and lurk in divers places of other realms for many years' space as a banished man, at the length Edwin came to king Redwald, beseeching him that he would save him and defend his life from the snares and earnest search of this his deadly enemy. Who gladly entertained him and promised to fulfil this his petition. But after that king Æthilfrid had heard say that Edwin was seen in that province, and understood that he dwelt there familiarly with all his company, forthwith he sent out his ambassadors to king Redwald, with a great sum of money to procure Edwin's death. But it prevailed nothing. Then sent he the second time, and the third time also, offering greater gifts and more plentifully, both gold and silver, threatening him at the last with war, if his request were not accomplished. Then king Redwald, either dreading the threats, or corrupted with the bribes, granted his request, and promised that he would put Edwin to death himself,

or else yield him up to the ambassadors. Which thing when a certain faithful friend of Edwin's had marked and well understood, he entered incontinent to the chamber where Edwin purposed to take his rest (for it was now the first hour of the night) and calling him out of doors, told him what the king had promised to do against him, saying in the end this much: 'I shall therefore (if it so please you) lead you out of this province and bring you into such a place that neither king Redwald nor yet king Æthilfrid shall be able to find you.' To whom Edwin answered: 'Sir, I thank you most heartily for this your great gentleness. But I cannot follow your counsel herein. For, first, I must not break my promise, which I have made to so great and mighty a prince as is king Redwald, especially whereas he hath done me no harm nor wrong, nor hath as yet showed any hatred or displeasure towards me. And truly, if I must of necessity die thus, I had rather he should put me to death than any baser man or person of less nobility. Again, whither, I pray you, should I flee now, who have so many years and so long time walked like a vagabond through all provinces of this isle of Britain, only to avoid and eschew mine enemies' snares and assaults?'

Now when this his friend was gone, Edwin remained alone, and sitting sadly before the palace began to be troubled with many storms and vexations of thoughts, as a man not witting what to do or whither to go, in this so rueful case. After he had been long vexed with inward and privy troubles of mind, burning inwardly with close fire of secret sorrow, behold, in the great silence and quiet of the midnight he saw a man utterly unknown to him, both for visage and countenance and also for his array and apparel, to approach and draw towards him. Whom because he had espied thus and at a blush, and so strangely disguised, he was not a little afraid. The stranger cometh even unto him, greeteth him, and asketh him wherefore he sat so sorrowful on the stone abroad, watching and all alone, at that hour especially when other men were within at rest and in their deep sleep. Then Edwin likewise demanded of him what concern it were of his, whether he passed the

night within doors or without. To whom this man answered and said : 'Think ye not but that I know the cause of your heaviness and watch, and also of this your solitary sitting without doors. For I know certainly who ye be, and wherefore you are so sad and sorrowful, and also what mischief you fear shortly shall befall you. But tell me, of friendship, what reward would you give him that should now rid you quite out of all these sorrows and troubles, and persuade king Redwald that neither he himself should hurt you, nor yield you up to your enemies that they might slay you?' When Edwin answered that he would give all that he possibly could, to any such a one, for reward of so good a turn, this man added moreover : 'But what if, beside this, he do warrant you that ye shall be a king, and all your enemies vanquished, yea, and that in such sort that you shall not only excel all your ancient progenitors, but also far pass in power all the kings of Englishmen which have ever been in this country?' Here Edwin, being made more firm and constant by oft questioning, doubted not to promise that in all points and at all times he would be answerable with worthy thanksgiving to the man that should bestow on him such great benefits. Then this man spake the third time and said : 'But tell me again ; what if, beside all this, the same man which showeth you now before, that you shall hereafter surely and undoubtedly have such and so great benefits, can give you also better counsel and more profitable for your soul's health and salvation than any your kinsmen and ancestors heard of ; could ye then consent and obey him and hearken to his wholesome sayings ?' Here Edwin promised out of hand, without any longer delay, that he would altogether follow his learning and doctrine, which both could and would deliver him from so many miseries and so great dangers as he was in, and exalt him afterward to the reign and sovereignty of his country. Which his answer was heard and taken. Then this man straightway, which had so long talked with him, laid his right hand upon Edwin's head and said : 'When this sign therefore shall happen hereafter in such sort to you, remember well this time

and this our talk, and defer not at that time to fulfil and accomplish this that you do now promise me.' Which being said, suddenly he vanished away, to the intent that Edwin might perceive that it was no man, but a spirit, which appeared to him.

Now when this young prince was left alone and sat there solitary, rejoicing with himself for this gentle consolation and good comfort, but yet very careful and much considering with himself who it should be, or whence he should come, which had thus spoken and talked familiarly with him, behold his foresaid friend came again, and greeting him cheerfully, 'Arise, Edwin,' said he, 'and come in. Let pass this your cark and cares. Set your heart at rest and take your quiet sleep. For the king's mind is changed, neither doth he purpose now or intend to do you any wrong, but rather to defend you and accomplish his promised faith unto you. For after he had showed the queen in secret his purpose which I told you of before, she withdrew him from so evil and so deadly an intention, saying that it was in no wise meet for such a king, of so great prowess and honour as he was, to sell his best and dearest friend, being now brought into straits and misery, for a little gold; nor that he should break his faith and promise, which ought to be more esteemed than all treasures, or not bide by his word for the greed and love of money.'

But, to be short, the king did even as his lady had counselled him to do. For he not only betrayed not and yielded not to the ambassadors this his banished man Edwin, but helped him rather to the kingdom. For as soon as these ambassadors were thus with denial departed home again, he gathered incontinently a mighty army to conquer king Æthilfrid. Whom he slew without difficulty (because he marched forth against him hastily and with a weak and unordered host) in the borders of the Mercians, at the east side of the river called Idle. For indeed king Æthilfrid had not time and space enough granted him to gather all his force together, and to join his power with well disposing his host and soldiers

in order. In this battle Rægenheri, king Redwald's son, was slain. And thus Edwin, according to the oracle which he had received, not only avoided the danger of his most deadly enemy, but also by his death succeeded in the honour of his sovereignty and kingdom.

Now therefore, to return again unto my purpose, though bishop Paulinus seriously preached the word of God, yet king Edwin slacked and lingered to believe him, using yet for a certain space at divers competent hours to sit solitary (as I have said before) and diligently to count with himself what were best to be done, and what religion was best to be followed. At which solitary meditation of the prince this good and godly bishop Paulinus entered on a day into the palace, and, coming to the king, laid his right hand on his head, and asked him whether he remembered that sign or no. The king suddenly trembled thereat for fear. And when he would have fallen down at Paulinus's feet, the bishop lifted him up and spake after a familiar sort thus unto him: 'Behold, O sovereign prince, by the bountiful hand and power of our Lord and God you have escaped the hand and vengeance of your most hated and dreaded enemy. Behold also, by his most gracious goodness you have obtained the sovereignty and rule of the kingdom. Remember now therefore the third thing which you promised him, and defer no longer to perform and accomplish the same, by receiving his faith and keeping his commandments, who hath delivered you from your temporal adversities and exalted you to the honour and majesty of a king. Whose holy will if you will hereafter obey and evermore do his pleasure, which by me he preacheth and declareth unto you, he will also deliver you from the perpetual torment of hell, and make you partaker with him in heaven of the eternal kingdom and bliss without end.'

(13) Which word when the king heard, he answered immediately both that he would, and also that he was bound, to receive this faith which bishop Paulinus had preached and taught. 'But yet I think it good,' quoth he, 'first to confer

and commune hereof with my friends and my "Witan": that, if they shall haply think herein as I do, then we may be christened all together in the fount of life.' Whereunto when bishop Paulinus agreed, king Edwin calling the 'Witan' together consulted with them, and asked severally each of them what manner of doctrine this seemed to be, which until that day had never been heard of before, and how they liked the honour and worshipping of this new God which was preached now amongst them.

To whom Coifi, first of all his priests, answered: 'May it like your highness to prove and try well what manner of doctrine this is which now is preached unto us. But this much shall I surely say, and, as I certainly know, protest and confess unto you, that the religion which unto this day we have ever observed and kept, hath no virtue nor goodness in it at all. For none of your grace's subjects hath been at any time more earnest and diligent in worshipping of our gods than I have been: and yet, notwithstanding, many of them have received of your grace's bounteousness more ample benefits than I have, and many of them have been better prospered in all they took in hand to do, or sought to get, than ever I was. But if the gods could ought have done, they would have rather holpen me, who at all times served them so duly. Wherefore it remaineth, that if these things which be now newly preached to us shall be found after good examination the better, and of more strength and steadfastness, that then without longer delay we hasten to receive and embrace them.'

To this persuasion of Coifi, another of the nobles consenting said: 'Such seemeth to me, dear sovereign, the life of men present here in earth (for the comparison of our uncertain time and days to live) as if a sparrow, beaten with wind and weather, should chance to fly in at one door of the hall, and flitting there a little about, straightway fly out at another, while your grace is at dinner in the presence of your aldormen and thanes; the hall itself being then pleasant and warm with a soft fire burning amidst thereof, but all

places and ways abroad troubled with tempest, raging storms, winter winds, hail and snow. Now your grace considereth that this sparrow, while it was within the house, felt no smart of tempestuous wind or rain. But after the short space of this warm air, the poor bird escapeth your sight, and returneth from winter to winter again. So the life of man appeareth here in earth and is to be seen for a season : but what may or shall follow the same, or what hath gone before it, that surely know we not. Therefore if this new learning can inform us of any better surety, methinks it is worthy to be followed.'

Thus, or in like manner, said the rest of the aldormen and the king's counsellors, no doubt by the holy inspiration of God. . . . But that I may be short, and come near my purpose, the king gave his full and plain consent to this holy man, bishop Paulinus, willing him to preach the gospel freely ; and himself renouncing there all idolatry, promised that he would receive and embrace the faith of Christ. And demanding then of this beforesaid Coifi, priest of his sacrifices, who should first profane the altars and destroy the temples of idols with all the fences wherewith they were environed, 'Marry,' quoth he, 'I will. For who may better than I, which once by foolishness worshipped and highly esteemed them? Therefore to the good example of all others I will now myself, through the wisdom of God (that is one, only and true God) given unto me, beat down and utterly destroy the abomination of our temples.' So, forsaking in this wise all superstitious custom and vain dread, he besought the king to grant him harness and armour, and therewith a great courser and mighty courageous stallion horse, on which he mounted lustily, and with all speed rode forth to batter and beat down to the ground the idols. Now was it not lawful for a priest of the sacrifices either to wear harness and armour or to ride on other than a mare. But Coifi made small count thereof. For being already well harnessed and strongly girded with a sword about his loins, sitting fast on the king's courser and stout stallion, he took also in his hand a spear,

and so did march and set forth against the pernicious idol. Which sight when the people saw, they thought he had been mad. Yet he for all that stayed not, but as soon as he approached near the temple profaned it, casting therein the spear which he held in his hand, and, much rejoicing now because he knew the true worshipping of God, commanded the company which was there with him to destroy the temple, to fire the idolatrous altars, and break the fences that were thereabout. And truly the place where those idols sometime were is now to be seen, not far from York, to the east, beyond the river Derwent, and is at this present day called *Godmundingaham* (Goodmanham). . . .

(14) Then king Edwin, with all the æthelings of his country and much part of the commons, received Christ's faith and came to the laver of holy regeneration, the eleventh year of his reign, which was the year of our Lord 627, and about the hundred and eightieth after the entrance of the Englishmen into Britain. He was christened at York on Easter Sunday, which was the 1st of the Ides of April, in S. Peter the Apostle's Church, which he had in all speed set up of wood while he was catechised and instructed there in the faith. In this city of York he appointed a bishop's see for bishop Paulinus, his informer and teacher; at whose request and petition, as soon as himself was christened, he builded in that same place a great temple of stone for an ample and large cathedral church, in the midst whereof he would have enclosed this his own proper oratory, which himself had first made of wood. Laying therefore deep foundations about this his first oratory, he began to build there a fair church foursquare. But before the wall thereof came to a just highness, the king was slain by cruel death, and left that royal work to be ended by king Oswald his successor. Now Paulinus from that time, for six years after, that is to the end of king Edwin's reign, preached the word of God continually by his good word and favour throughout all that province. . . . And (as it is reported) then was the fervour of faith and earnest desire of holy baptism so great amongst the people of Northumbria, that on

a certain time when bishop Paulinus came with the king's and queen's majesty to the court or prince's palace at Yeverin [Northumberland], he stayed there with them thirty-six days, only occupied in catechising and instructing the people in Christ's faith, and afterward baptising them : in each of the which days he did nothing else from morning to evening but instruct them with the word of God, and teach them the faith and salvation in Christ Jesus, which flocked thither out of all places and villages thereabout. Whom after he had thus informed and taught he baptised in the river Glen. . . . And this much did bishop Paulinus in Bernicia. But in the country of Deira, where he lay most commonly with the king, he baptised in the flood Swale which runneth fast by the village of *Cataract* (Catterick). . . .

(15) Now had king Edwin (by common report) such a zeal and earnest devotion toward the Christian faith that he persuaded Eorpwald, king Redwald's son and king of the East Angles, to leave off the vain superstition of idols and to come with his whole realm and embrace the true faith and receive the sacraments of Christ's church. For his father king Redwald before him was christened in Kent, but, alas, in vain. For returning home again he was seduced by his wife and certain other perverse teachers, and being in such wise depraved from the sincerity and pureness of faith, his end was worse than his beginning. For he would seem, after the manner of the old Samaritans, to serve both Christ and his own false gods too, as he did before : and in one temple he had erected an altar for the sacrifice of Christ and another little altar for burnt sacrifices to his idols and devils. The which temple Aldwulf, king of that province after him (who lived in this our age), said that it dured so unto his time, and witnessed that he saw it himself in his childhood. Truly this before-named king Redwald was a noble prince by birth, although vile and base in his acts and deeds. For he was king Tytil's son, whose father's name was Wuffa, of whom the kings of the East Angles are called *Wuffingas*.

But king Eorpwald not long after he had been christened

was slain by a gentile and paynim named Rieberht, and from that time three years after the province lived in error, falling from the Christian religion, until at the last Sigberet, king Eorpwald's brother, took the kingdom, a man in all points learned and most Christian. Who, while his brother was yet alive, living banished in Gaul, was christened there and instructed in the holy mysteries of our faith, of which he went about to make all his realm partaker, as soon as he came to the crown. To whose good endeavour herein bishop Felix did most earnestly favour and with great praise apply himself. Who when he came from Burgundy (where he was born and took holy orders) into Britain to Honorius the archbishop, and had opened this his desire and godly purpose unto him, the archbishop gladly gave him license and sent him forth to preach the word of God unto the foresaid East Angles, where certes his zeal and virtuous desire proved not in vain. For this holy husbandman and happy tiller of the spiritual field found in that nation plentifulness of fruit and increase of people that believed him. For he brought all that province, being now delivered by his help from their long iniquity and unhappiness, unto the faith and works of justice and, in the end, reward of perpetual bliss and happiness for ever, according to the good abodement of his name, which in Latin is called 'Felix' and in our English tongue soundeth 'Happy.' He was bishop in the city of Dunwich [Suffolk] afterward; where, when he had ruled the church of Christ seventeen years in that dignity and in that province, he ended his life in peace.

(16) But bishop Paulinus continued, and also at this time preached the word of God in the province of Lindsey, which is the next toward the south bank of Humber, bending out to the sea; where he first converted to our Lord the reeve of Lincoln, whose name was Blæcca, with all his household. In the which city he built a well wrought church of stone, the roof whereof, either for long lack of reparations or by the spoil of enemies, is now cast down, but the walls thereof stand yet to be seen at this present day, and yearly

some or other miracles are wont to be shoven there, to the great good and comfort of them which faithfully seek therefore. In this church, after Justus's depàrture hence unto Christ, Paulinus consecrated Honorius bishop in his room, as I shall show more conveniently hereafter. Now as touching the faith and belief of this province, a certain priest and abbot, a man of good credit and to be believed, whose name is Deda, of the monastery of Partney, told me that one of the elders of that convent (as he reported himself) was baptized with many other of the people there at noonday by bishop Paulinus in the presence of king Edwin and in the flood of Trent; the which father and elderly man was wont to describe Paulinus's person, saying that he was a tall man, somewhat crooked-backed, and black of hair, lean in face and having a hooked and thin nose, in countenance both dreadful and reverend. . . .

But in those days such was the peace and tranquillity throughout all Britain, which way soever king Edwin's dominions lay, that (as it is yet in a common proverb) a weak woman might have walked with her new-born babe over all the island, even from sea to sea, without any damage or danger. Moreover this king did so much tender his subjects and the wealth of the commons, that in most places where he saw fair, clear well-springs breaking out by the highway's side, he erected stakes, from which he bade brazen cups to be hung, which cups either for fear of the king's displeasure no man durst touch farther than to his own present use and necessity, or no man would take them away for the love and goodwill they bore to their prince. Who was for the time of his reign so honoured and loved that the triumphing banners and flags were borne before him not in war only but in peace too, wheresoever he went abroad or rode with his thanes in progress about the great cities, towns and shires of his dominions. Yea, even when he passed through the streets to any place, there was carried before him that kind of flag or streamer which the Romans call Tufa and the Englishmen a Thuf. . . .

(20) When king Edwin had most triumphantly reigned over the English and Britons both, the space of seventeen years (in some of which, as about the number of six years, he had himself been subject to Christ and ever looked for his reign and kingdom), Cædwalla, king of the Britons, made a rebellion against him, having aid and succour thereunto of Penda, a stout man and of the king's blood of Mercia, over which nation from that time he had, with divers chances and fortune, rule and governance for the space of twenty-two years. Now when they had thus entered fight with king Edwin in a plain, called Hatfield [near Doncaster], they slew him there on the 4th of the Ides of October, in the year of our Lord 633, and of king Edwin's age the forty-eighth year, whose whole host was either presently murdered there or shamefully put to flight. In the which wars one of king Edwin's sons, that lusty and warlike young prince Osfrid, was killed before his father died. The other son Eadfrid of very urgent necessity fled unto king Penda for succour, of whom afterward, against the promised faith and his solemn oath, he was most cruelly put to death in the reign of king Oswald. At this time there was a very grievous persecution in the church and a foul murder of the Northumbrians. . . . For king Penda, with all the nation of the Mercians, was wholly given to idolatry, and altogether heathen and unchristened, but king Cædwalla, although he had the name of a Christian and professed that life, yet was he in mind and manners so rude and outrageous that he would not spare either women's weakness or children's innocence, but put all to death with grievous and bitter torments, according to his beastly cruelty and unmerciful tyranny, wasting a long time and raging over all the provinces, purposing moreover with himself to exterminate out of the borders of Britain the whole nation of Englishmen, and to extinguish the very name of them. Neither did he ought esteem or anything reverence and honour the Christian religion which the Englishmen had; it being unto this day the Britons' manner and custom to set light by the faith and religion of Englishmen, neither

will they in any one point more communicate with them than they would with heathens and paynims. King Edwin's head was brought unto York, and afterward carried into S. Peter's church, which church he himself had begun to build. . . .

Seeing therefore there was none other remedy, nor any safety could be found, but only by flight, bishop Paulinus, accompanying the good queen Æthilberg, with whom not long before he came into that country, took ship, and returned again to Kent. . . . Now was the see of Rochester vacant at this time. For Romanus, bishop thereof, sent from the archbishop Justus legate to Pope Honorius, was drowned in the tempest, going to Italy. The bishop Paulinus, at the offer of bishop Honorius,¹ and at king Eadbald's request, took that charge on him. . . . And in his archbishopric of York he left James his deacon, a good and godly man. Who, living long after in that church, took many preys out of the devil's teeth, and won many souls unto Christ. . . . Who, because he was cunning in song and music, and also in the office and service of the choir, when that country was more quiet, and the company of faithful began a little to increase again, set up a school amongst them. . . .

IX. CELTIC TRADITION OF EDWIN.

From the *Historia Brittonum*, cc. 61, 63.

Osfrid and Eadfrid (*Osfrid et Eadfrid*) were the two sons of Edwin (*Edguin*) and fell with him at the battle of Meicen. And the kingdom was never renewed in his family, for not one of them escaped from the battle, but all were slain by the host of Cadwallon of Gwynedd (*Catguollauni regis Guendotae regionis*). . . . Edwin the son of Ælli (*Eoguin filius Alli*) reigned seventeen years. He it was who occupied Elmet,²

¹ Not the Pope, but the new archbishop of Canterbury who had succeeded Justus. See above, p. 137.

² The Celtic kingdom of Elmet was in what is now the West Riding of Yorkshire. The name is still used to distinguish places in this district (e.g. Sherburn-in-Elmet) from places of the same name elsewhere in Yorkshire.

and expelled Certic, king of that region. Eanfled his daughter, on the twelfth day after Pentecost, received baptism with all the household, men and women, attached to her. Edwin (*Eadguin*) received baptism the following Easter, and with him were baptized twelve thousand men. And if anyone wishes to know who baptized them, Rum map Urbgen baptized them, and for forty days he did not cease to baptize all that race of tykes¹ (*omne genus ambronum*), and through his preaching many were converted to Christianity.

From the *Annales Cambriae*.

[626]² Edwin (*Etguin*) is baptized: and Run son of Urbgen baptized him.

[629] Cadwallon besieged in the island of Glannauc [Puffin Island, off Anglesey].

[630]² Battle of Meicen, and there Edwin was killed with his two sons, and Cadwallon was the victor.

From the *Annals of Tigernach*.

[631]² Battle between Edwin son of Ælli (*Etuin mac Ailli*) king of the Saxons, who ruled over the whole of Britain, in which he was conquered by Chon king of the Britons and Panta the Saxon.

¹ The *Ambrones* were a famous tribe of Northern marauders, and from this passage some have supposed that they took part in the colonization of Northumbria. But the name came to be used as a common noun, 'marauder, ruffian,' and is perhaps used in that sense here, or else is miswritten for *Umbro-num*, 'men of the Humber.' The translation given in the text is equally applicable whether we read *Ambronum* or *Umbro-num*, as it is an honourable and accepted synonym for Yorkshireman, but connotes 'ruffian' when applied to other persons. The mention of Rum son of Urbgen (? the king Urien mentioned in *Chap. III, Extract V*), is an attempt to claim for the Welsh the credit of converting Northumbria.

² These Celtic dates anticipate Bede's dating by one, two, or three years.

X. KING OSWALD OF NORTHUMBRIA (634-642).

Denisburn was blocked with the bodies of Cadwal's men. . . .

Maserfield was white with the bones of the Saints.

Fragments preserved by Henry of Huntingdon.

From Bede's *History*, III, 1-3, 5, 6, 9.

King Edwin being slain in battle, the son of his uncle Ælfric, called Osric, who after that he had heard Paulinus preach received the faith, succeeded him in the governance of Deira, of the which province he had the pedigree of his parentage and the first beginning of his kingdom. But Bernicia (for the nation of Northumbria had been divided of old time into these two countries) was ruled by Æthilfrid's son, named Eanfrid, who had of that province the beginning of his kindred and kingdom. For during all the time of Edwin's reign the sons of king Æthilfrid, who (as we said before) reigned before Edwin, were banished with a great number of young æthelings, and so lived among the Scots or Picts, where they were instructed according to the Scots' doctrine, and had received the grace of baptism. These young princes after the death of their enemy king Edwin, returning into their country, the eldest of them, Eanfrid, took Bernicia. But, alas, as both had now received the crowns of an earthly kingdom, so likewise both, in giving and abandoning themselves to the devil, lost the divine mysteries of the heavenly kingdom wherein they were instructed, and yielded themselves again to be defiled with the former old filth of idolatry. This apostacy remained not long unpunished. For Cædwalla, the king of the Britons, with wicked force but with worthy vengeance, slew them both; and first he slew Osric, in the next summer ensuing, who was rashly besieging him in the capital town [York]. But, suddenly, Cædwalla issued out against him with all his host, and slew Osric and all his army. Then afterward, when by the space of a whole year, having possessed the provinces of the people of Northumbria, not as a king that were a conqueror, but as an outrageous tyrant destroying them and

with tragical slaughter rending them in pieces, he put to death Eanfrid also, who had come unto him very unadvisedly with twelve chosen soldiers,¹ minding to entreat for peace.

That same year continueth until this day hateful to all good men, as well for the apostasy of the English kings forsaking the religion of Christ, as also for the king of Britons' furious tyranny. Wherefore all who reckon the length of the reigns of kings² have thought it best that the memory of those apostate kings should be utterly forgotten, and that the selfsame year should be assigned to the reign of the king that followed next, which was Oswald, a man dearly beloved of God. Who, after that his brother Eanfrid was slain, coming unlooked for with an army, small indeed but fenced with the faith of Christ, the Britons' cursed captain and that victorious host, whereof he made his avaunt that nothing could be able to withstand it, was vanquished and slain in a certain place which in the English tongue is called *Denisesburna* [Rowley Water, Northumberland].

(2) The place is showed until this day and is had in great reverence, where Oswald, when he should come to this battle, did set up a sign of the holy cross and beseeched God humbly upon his knees that with his heavenly help he would succour his servants being in so great a distress. The report also is that (the cross being made with quick speed, and the hole prepared wherein it should be set) the king, being fervent in faith, did take it in haste and did put it in the hole and held it with both his hands, when it was set up, until it was fastened to the ground with earth which the soldiers heaped about it. Now when this was done he cried out aloud to his whole army: 'Let us all kneel upon our knees, and let us all together pray earnestly the almighty, living and true God mercifully to defend us from the proud and cruel enemy: for he knoweth that we enterprise wars in a rightful quarrel for the safeguard of our subjects.' All did as he commanded them. And thus in the dawning of the day they marched

¹ *Lectis militibus*, Bede: the O.E. translation calls them 'witan.'

² See p. 101 above, where the Northumbrian regnal list is given.

forth, encountered with their enemy, and (according to the merit of their faith) achieved and won the victory. In the place of which prayer, manifold miraculous cures are known to be done, questionless in token and remembrance of the king's faith. For even until this present day many men do customably cut chips out of the very tree of that holy cross, which casting into waters and giving thereof to sick men and beasts to drink, or sprinkling them therewith, many forthwith are restored to their health. That place is in the English tongue named Heaven Field. . . .

(3) Shortly after that the same Oswald was come to the crown, he, being desirous that all the people which he began to rule should be instructed in the grace of Christian faith, whereof now he had very great proofs in vanquishing his foreign enemies, he sent to the chief men of the Scots, among whom he, living in banishment, and the thanes which were with him, were christened; making a request unto them that they would send him a prelate, by whose doctrine and ministry the realm of England which he ruled might both learn the gifts and also receive the sacraments of our Lord's faith. Neither was this godly request denied him. For bishop Aidan was directed straight unto him, a man of marvellous meekness, godliness and modesty, and one that had a zeal in God's quarrel, although not in every point according to knowledge. For he was wont to keep Easter Sunday from the fourteenth day after the change of the moon until the twentieth, according to the custom of his country, whereof we have divers times made mention. For the north part of the Scots and all the Picts did in that manner solemnise Easter Sunday, thinking that in this keeping of Easter Day they followed the advertisement written by the holy praiseworthy father Anatolius. . . . Truly the Scots which dwelt in the south coasts of the isle of Ireland had long ago learned to keep the feast of Easter by the canonical approved custom, being advised thereto by the Pope, sitting in the See Apostolic.

To this bishop Aidan king Oswald appointed Lindisfarne

for his see and bishopric, according as he had himself desired. . . . And in this most godly endeavour both of the prince and of the bishop this was a gracious and pleasant sight, that whereas the bishop was unskilful of the English tongue, and the king, ^(C. 11) by reason of his long banishment in Scotland, understood and spake the Scottish very well, when the bishop preached the faith of Christ, the king was interpreter of the heavenly word to his aldormen and thanes. Hereupon for the space of a long time people flocked out of the land of the Scots into Britain, and such as were called to the high degree of priesthood began with great and fervent devotion to preach the word of faith to those provinces of England which king Oswald governed, baptizing all such as believed. Therefore churches were builded in places convenient: the people rejoicing assembled together to hear the word of God: possessions and territories were given by the king's bountifulness for the foundation of religious houses: the little children of England and elder folks were by the Scots their instructors trained up in observation of regular discipline. For such as came to preach were for the most part monks. Aidan the bishop himself was a monk of the isle which is called Hii [Iona]. The house of his religion was, no small time, the head house of all the monasteries almost of the northern Scots, and of all the Picts, and had the sovereignty over them. . . .

(5) From this isle, therefore, and from this convent of monks founded by holy Columba, Aidan was sent and consecrated bishop to instruct England in the faith of Christ, (at what time Seghine, abbot and priest, was head of the same monastery). Wherein among other lessons of living, he left the clerks a most wholesome example of abstinence and continence. This thing did chiefly commend his doctrine to all men, that the learning which he taught was correspondent to the life that he led. And why? He was not desirous after worldly goods, he was not enamoured with present vanities. His joy and comfort was forthwith to distribute to the poor that met him all that was given him of kings or other wealthy

men of the world. He used to travel continually both in the city and in the country, never on horseback, but always on foot, except peradventure great need had forced him to ride. And in his travel what did he? Forsooth whomsoever he met, rich or poor, incontinent abiding for a time with them, either he allured them to receive the faith, if they were out of the faith, or strengthened them in the faith, if they were in it, exhorting them eftsoons no less in works than words to almsgiving and other good deeds. And his religious life so far passed the slackness and key-cold devotion of our time, that all they which went with him, were they professed into religion or were they lay brethren, gave themselves continually to contemplation, that is to say, bestowed all their time either in reading Scripture or in learning the Psalter. This was the daily exercise of him and his brethren, to what place soever they came. And if by chance it had happened (which yet happened seldom) that he were bidden to the king's banquet, he went in accompanied with one or two clerks, and, taking a short repast, he made speedily haste to read with his brethren, or else went elsewhere forth to pray. Every devout man and woman being at that time taught by his ensamples took up a custom all the whole year through, saving between Easter and Whitsunday, upon Wednesday and Friday to continue in fasting until three of the clock in the afternoon. If rich men had done anything amiss, he never for hope of honour or fear of displeasure spared to tell them of it, but with sharp rebuking amended them. If any guest or stranger had come unto him, were he never so worshipful, he never gave money¹ but only made them good cheer. As for such gifts as in money were liberally given him by rich men, he did either (as we have said) give them in a dole for the relief of the poor, or else he laid it out for the ransoming of those that had been wrongfully sold for slaves: finally, many of such as by money he had redeemed he made afterwards his

¹The giving and receiving of gifts was an essential part of Germanic courtesy. On this compare Tacitus, p. 65, above, also *Extract xii*, below.

scholars, bringing them up in learning and virtue and exalting them to the high dignity of priesthood.

The report is that (when king Oswald desired first to have a prelate out of Scotland who might preach the faith to him and his people) another man of a more austere stomach was first sent: who when, after a little while preaching to the English nation he did nothing prevail, nor yet was willingly heard of the people, he returned into his country, and in the assembly of the elders he made relation, how that in teaching he could do the people no good to the which he was sent, forasmuch as they were folks that might not be reclaimed, of a hard capacity and fierce nature. Then the elders (as they say) began in council to treat at length what were best to be done, being no less desirous that the people should attain the salvation which they sought for, than sorry that the preacher whom they sent was not received. When Aidan (for he also was present at the council) replied to the priest of whom I spake, saying: 'Methinketh, brother, that you have been more rigorous than reason would with that unlearned audience, and that you have not, according to the Apostle's instruction, first given them milk of mild doctrine, until being by little and little nourished and weaned with the word of God, they were able to understand the more perfect mysteries and fulfil the greater commandments of God.' This being said, all that were at the assembly, looking upon Aidan, debated diligently his saying, and concluded that he above the rest was worthy of that charge and bishopric, and that he should be sent to instruct those unlearned paynims. For he was found to be chiefly garnished with the grace of discretion, the mother of all virtues. Thus, making him bishop, they sent him forth to preach. Who, when he had taken his time, even as before he was known to be endued with discretion, so did he afterward show himself to be beautified with all other virtues.

(6) King Oswald and that part of the English nation of whom he was the sovereign governor, being from thenceforth instructed by this right reverend prelate's doctrine, did not only learn to hope for the heavenly kingdom unknown to his

forefathers, but also conquered (more than any of his ancestors did) earthly kingdoms by the power of the same one almighty God who made heaven and earth. Briefly, all the nations and provinces of Britain, which spake four divers languages, that is to say, the Britons, the Picts, the Scots, the English, became subject unto him. And yet being advanced to so royal majesty, he was ever notwithstanding (which is marvellous to be reported) lowly to all, gracious to the poor, and bountiful to all pilgrims and strangers. The report is that at a certain time, when on the holy day of Easter the king and the foresaid bishop were set down to dinner, and a silver dish replenished with princely dainties was set on the table before them, being now ready to say grace, suddenly entered in his thane to whom was committed the charge to receive the needy, and told the king that a very great number of poor people flocking from all places did sit in the streets, looking for some alms from the king; who forthwith gave commandment that the delicacies which were set before his own person should be bestowed on the poor, and the dish of silver broken and by piecemeal parted among them. At the sight whereof the bishop, who sat by the king, being delighted with such a work of mercy, took him by the right hand and said: 'I pray God this hand be never consumed.' Which thing came even so to pass as in his blessing he desired. For whereas after, the king being slain in battle, his hands with the arm were cut off from the residue of his body, so it is that his hands to this time continue uncorrupted, and are reserved in a silver shrine in S. Peter's church, where with worthy honour they are worshipped of all men in the king's city, which is named [Bamborough] of a lady sometime queen, called Bebbæ.

By this king's travail the provinces of the Deirans and the Bernicians, which did so deadly hate one the other, were reconciled and joined together in one allegiance and amity, like as they were one people. This king Oswald was king Edwin's nephew by his sister Acha's side. And it was meet that so noble a predecessor should have so worthy an heir, as

well of his religion as of his realm, and that of his own kindred.

(9) Oswald, the most Christian king of Northumbria, reigned nine years, that year also being reckoned which both by the deadly cruelty of the king of the Britons, and also through the wicked apostasy of the two kings of the English, is to be accursed, and not to be had in memory. . . . At the full end of these nine years Oswald was slain in the field, in a cruel battle by the same paynim people and paynim king of the Mercians, by whom also his predecessor Edwin was killed, in a place which in the English tongue is called Maserfeld, in the eight and thirtieth year of his age, on the fifth day of the month of August. How great the faith of this king was in God, of how hearty and fervent devotion, it well appeared after his death by sundry miracles; for to this day cures of the diseased, both men and beasts, cease not to be wrought in that place where he was slain of the miscreants and heathen, fighting for his country.

XI. CELTIC TRADITION OF KING OSWALD.

From the *Life of Columba* by Adamnan.

Adamnan (c. 624-704) was abbot of Iona from 679 to 704. His *Life of Columba* has been edited (and translated) by J. T. Fowler (Clarendon Press, new edit., 1920). The same story is told more briefly in the 'Life of Columba' by Cuimine Ailbhe (abbot of Iona, 657-69) given in Pinkerton's *Lives of the Scottish Saints*, ed. Metcalfe, i., 68-9.

For when the same king Oswald [*Ossuald*] had pitched his camp on the battle-field, he saw in a vision, when sleeping in his tent, S. Columba gleaming in angelic beauty . . . and saying, 'Be strong and of good comfort, for lo, I will be with thee. . . . The Lord has granted unto me that thy foes may be routed, and thy enemy Catlon given into thy hands, that thou mayest return a victor from this war, and reign happily.' The king, aroused, called his 'witan' and told them the vision: all were comforted by it, and the whole nation promised that after returning from the war they would

believe and receive baptism: for till that time the whole Saxon race had been wrapped in the darkness of heathendom and ignorance, save king Oswald himself, and twelve men who had been baptized with him when he was in exile among the Scots [i.e. at Iona]. . . . Oswald advanced against many thousands with a much smaller army. God granted him, as had been promised, an easy and happy victory. He killed Catlon, came back from the war victor, and afterwards became ruler of the whole of Britain. My predecessor, Abbot Failbhe [abbot of Iona, 669-79] told this to me: he told me that he had heard it from the mouth of King Oswald himself when Oswald was telling his vision to Abbot Seghine [abbot of Iona, 623-52].

From the *Historia Brittonum*, cc. 64, 65.

Oswald son of Æthilfrid (*Eadfred*) reigned nine years: he is Oswald *Lamnguin* (Oswald of the fair hand). He killed Cadwallon, king of Gwynedd (*Catgublaun regem Guenedotae*) in the battle of *Catscaul*,¹ with great slaughter of his army. . . . Penda, son of Pybba . . . slew S. Oswald, king of the Northumbrians (*Nordorum*) through guile. He fought the battle of *Cocboy*,² in which fell Eoua, son of Pippa, his brother, king of the Mercians, and Oswald, king of the Northumbrians, and he himself was victor through the art of the Devil. He was not baptized, and he never believed in God.

From the *Annales Cambriae*.

[631] Battle of Catscaul¹ (*Cantscaul*) in which Cadwallon (*Catguollaun*) fell.

[644] Battle of Cocboy,² in which Oswald, king of the Northumbrians (*Nordorum*) and Eoba, king of the Mercians, fell.

¹ Catscaul (Battle within the Wall) is the Battle of Denisesburn or Heaven Field, the correct date of which is apparently 634.

² Cocboy is the battle of Maserfield (correct date 642).

XII. OSWIU, OSWINI AND AIDAN.

From Bede's *History*, III, 14, 16, 17.

This blessed king Oswald being exalted to the kingdom of heaven, his brother Oswiu, a young man about thirty years old, took on him in his stead the governance of the earthly kingdom, and ruled the realm with great disquietness and trouble the space of eight and twenty years. For the paynim people of the Mercians, which slew his brother, made him battle. Also his own son Alhfrid did likewise rebel and resist him. Last of all Oedilwald his nephew, son to Oswald, withstood him. . . .

Oswiu at the beginning of his reign had a partaker of his estate royal named Oswini, who descended of king Edwin's blood, that is to say, the son of Osric, of whom we have made mention before; a marvellous devout and godly man, who seven years together ruled Deira, in most plenty of things, and with the love of all his subjects. But Oswiu, who governed the other part of Northumbria toward the north, to wit Bernicia, could not long live peaceably with him, but rather, as causes of debate increased, he slew him at length most cruelly. . . .

This was done on the 13th of the Kalends of September in the ninth year of his reign, in a place which is called *In Getlingum* [probably Gilling] where, for the satisfaction of this heinous act, there was afterward a monastery builded, in the which daily prayers should be offered up to God for the redemption of both the kings' souls, as well the murderer as the party murdered.

King Oswini was of countenance beautiful, of stature high, in talk courteous and gentle, in all points civil and amiable: no less honourable and bountiful to the noble than free and liberal to persons of low degree. Whereby it happened, that for his outward personage, inward heart, and princely port, he had the love of all men. Especially the nobility of all countries frequented his court, and coveted to be received in his service.

Among other his rare virtues and princely qualities, his humility and passing lowliness excelled. Whereof we will be contented to recite one most worthy example. He had given to Bishop Aidan a very fair and proper gelding, which that virtuous bishop (though he used most to travel on foot) might use to pass over waters and rivers, or when any other necessity constrained. It fortuned shortly after, a certain poor weak man met the bishop riding on his gelding, and craved an alms of him. The bishop, as he was a passing pitiful man, and a very father to needy persons, lighted off, and gave the poor man the gelding, gorgeously trapped.

The king hearing after hereof, talked of it with the bishop, as they were entering the palace to dinner, and said, 'What meant you, my lord, to give away to the beggar that fair gelding, which we gave you for your own use? Have we no other horses of less price, and other kind of rewards to bestow upon the poor, but that you must give away that princely horse, which we gave you for your own riding?' To whom the bishop answered, 'Why talketh your grace thus? Is that brood of the mare dearer in your sight than that son of God, the poor man?' Which being said, they went to dine. The bishop took his place appointed, but the king, coming then from hunting, would stand a while among his thanes by the fire to warm him. Where standing, and musing with himself upon the words which the bishop had spoken unto him, suddenly he put off his sword, giving it to his squire, and came in great haste to the bishop: falling down at his feet, and beseeching him not to be displeased, saying he would never more speak of it, nor measure any more hereafter what or how much the bishop should bestow of his goods upon the sons of God, which were the poor.

At which sight the bishop, being much astonished, arose suddenly and lifted up the king, telling him that he should quickly be pleased, if it would please him to sit down, and cast away all heaviness. Afterward, the king being at the bishop's request merry, the bishop contrariwise began to be heavy and sorry; in such sort, that the tears trickled down

by his cheeks. Of whom, when his chaplain in his mother tongue (which the king and his court understood not) had demanded why he wept: 'I know,' said he, 'that the king shall not live long. For never before this time have I seen an humble king. Whereby I perceive, that he shall speedily be taken out of this life: for this people is not worthy to have such a prince and governor.' Shortly after, the bishop's dreadful abodement was fulfilled, with the king's cruel death, as we have before declared. Bishop Aidan himself also was taken away out of this world, and received of God the everlasting rewards of his labours, even on the twelfth day after the king whom he so much loved was slain.

(16) Another miracle worthy remembrance, wrought by the same father, is reported of many, such as were most likely to have perfect knowledge of it. At what time Penda, king of the Mercians, invaded the province of Northumbria (this Aidan being bishop) wasting and spoiling the whole country, even unto Bamborough, the city of the king's own abode, being not able either by battle or by siege to win it, he minded to set it afire. He had for that purpose carried thither, having destroyed the suburbs of the city, a great quantity of beams, rafters, partition walls, wattles and thatch, wherewith he had compassed that part of the city, that adjoineth to the land, to a great height; and the wind now serving at will, he kindled the fire and strove to burn down the town. This reverend prelate, Aidan, being then in Farne, about two miles from the city, whither oftentimes he used to depart to keep his secret trade of devotions and solitary contemplations (as even to this day they are wont to show his place of solitary abiding in that island), beholding the flakes of fire and great smoke over the walls of the city, lifting up his eyes and hands to heaven, with tears (as it is reported) cried out and said: 'Behold, O Lord, how great mischief Penda worketh!' Which words of that blessed man being pronounced, the winds being turned from the city turned back the fire again upon them who had kindled it; insomuch that some being hurt,

all made afraid, they were fain to leave the assault of the city, which they saw to be holpen by the hand of God.

(17) . . . This much have I written of this holy man and of his works, not yet commending in him his wrong and evil-accustomed observation of Easter according to his less perfect knowledge, but detesting that in him utterly, as also I have evidently declared in my book *De temporibus*. But as it behoveth a true historiographer, I have reported of him and of his doings, commending such things as were commendable and might profit the readers.

XIII. PENDA OF MERCIA.

At Winwed was wreaked the slaughter of Anna
The death of king Sigbert the death of king Ecgric
The death of king Oswald the death of king Edwin.

Fragment preserved by Henry of Huntingdon.

From Bede's *History*, III, 18, 21, 22, 24.

About this time, after Eorpwald (Redwald's successor), Sigberht his brother, a virtuous and devout man, reigned over the East Angles. This prince, while he lived in Gaul, flying the enmity of king Redwald, was there baptized; whereupon, after his return, coming to the crown, and desiring to follow that godly order which he had seen practised in Gaul, he set up a school to bring up children, by the help and aid of bishop Felix, whom he took out of Kent for that purpose, appointing them masters and teachers after the manner of the Kentish men.

This king was so enflamed with the love of heaven that leaving at the last all affairs of his realm to the government of his cousin Ecgric, who also before had part of his dominion with him, he entered a monastery which he had made for himself, where, being shorn, he bestowed his time to the achieving of the eternal kingdom of heaven. Wherein when he had continued a long time, the Mercians with their old captain Penda invaded his dominions. His people, finding themselves too weak, beseeched Sigberht for the encouraging

of their soldiers to come forth into the field with them; which, when of his own accord he would not agree unto, they plucked him by force out of the monastery and brought him against his will unto the field, hoping that the soldiers in the presence of their old valiant captain would less think upon flight and running away. Notwithstanding, the virtuous man, remembering his profession, being set in the midst of the mighty army, carried only a little rod in his hand. Thus of the cruel heathen he was killed, with king Ecgric, and the whole army discomfited.

Anna, son to Eni, of the king's blood, succeeded in the kingdom, a man of great virtue and the father of a blessed issue [Etheldreda, Ethelberga and Sexburga], as we shall hereafter in its place declare. This king also was afterward slain of the self-same Penda, the heathen captain of the Mercians.

(21) At this time the Middle Angles received the Christian faith and the sacraments thereof under Peada, their king, son to Penda, that cruel and unmerciful heathen. This being a virtuous young man, worthy of the name and person of a king, was of his father put in government of that country; who coming after to Oswiu, king of Northumbria, requiring Alhfred his daughter to wife, could in no other wise obtain his suit unless he would with his country receive the Christian faith and be baptized. Hereupon the gospel was preached unto him, who, hearing the promise of everlasting life, the hope of resurrection and immortality of the soul, yielded himself gladly to be christened, though he should not speed of his suit. To this he was much persuaded by Alhfrid, king Oswiu's son, who had married his sister Cyniburga, king Penda's daughter. Thus then he, with the thanes that waited upon him and all their servants, were baptized of Finan the bishop in a famous town of the king's called *Ad Murum*, from whence he returned home with much joy and comfort, accompanied with four priests, notable both for learning and for virtue, which should instruct and baptize his people.

These priests were called Cedd, Adda, Betti and Diuma who was a Scotsman born, the other three English. Adda was brother to Utta, that holy and virtuous priest . . . and abbot of the monastery called Gateshead. These foresaid priests entering the land of the Middle Angles with the prince, preached the word of God and were gladly heard. . . .

Neither did king Penda, father to this young prince, withstand or gainsay the preaching of the gospel in his dominions,¹ if any would hear it: but hated indeed and persecuted all such as, bearing the name of Christians, lived not according to the faith they professed, saying commonly that such men were wretched and worthily to be despised which regarded not to please their God in whom they believed. These things began two years before the death of king Penda. . . .

(22) At this very time the East Saxons by the means of king Oswiu received again the faith, which before, expelling Mellitus, the first bishop of London, out of the country, they abandoned. Their king was Sigberht, succeeding to Sigberht surnamed the Little. This Sigberht being a near and familiar friend of king Oswiu, then king of the Northumbrians, came by that occasion oftentimes to Northumbria. At which meetings king Oswiu used to persuade with him that such could not be gods which were made with men's hands, that wood or stone could not be any quick matter to make a living God. . . . These and such other godly advertisements being friendly and brotherly from time to time made and repeated to king Sigberht by Oswiu, he began at length, his other friends agreeing thereunto, to favour them and believe them. Whereupon advice being taken with his company, and all both consenting and pricking him forward, he was baptized of Finan the bishop in the royal seat of *Ad Murum*, nigh unto the wall wherewith the Romans girded Britain, twelve miles from the east sea.

King Sigberht being now a citizen of the everlasting

¹ I.e. in Mercia proper: the Middle Angles were part of Mercia in the broader, but not in the narrower sense.

kingdom, returned to his earthly kingdom, requiring of king Oswiu to have with him some learned men and preachers to convert his country to the faith; who sending to the land of the Middle Angles called to him Cedd, the man of God, and giving him another priest, directed them to the East Saxons, to preach there the faith. Where having throughout the country preached a long time the word of life and made up a great harvest to Christ, Cedd departed home again and came to the church at Lindisfarne to talk with Finan the bishop. Who, hearing the prosperous success of the gospel and the free course it had, calling unto him two other bishops, consecrated and ordained Cedd bishop of the East Saxons. Cedd being made bishop returned to his province, and with more authority perfected the work he had begun, erecting in divers places churches, making priests and deacons who in preaching and baptizing might aid him, especially in the cities of *Ythan-cæstir* and *Tillaburg* [*St. Peter's-on-the-Wall* and *Tilbury*], the first standing upon the Pante [*Blackwater*], the second upon the Thames. In which two places, assembling together divers newly christened, he instructed them after the rules of the religious life, as far as their tender capacity could then conceive.

Thus when the heavenly discipline and holy devotion daily increased to the great joy of the prince and the comfort of all the people, behold, by the instigation of the old enemy of mankind, this virtuous prince by the hands of his own kindred was murdered. The cruel executors of this heinous act were two brothers, who being examined upon what motion they committed that detestable fact, they answered, for no other cause but for that they hated the prince for his over-much clemency and meekness in pardoning his enemies and forgiving all offences done. . . . Though yet in this his guiltless death a true fault of his was punished, according as the holy bishop Cedd had foretold him. For one of the murderers lived in unlawful wedlock. And being therefore excommunicated of the bishop . . . (who also commanded all on their obedience neither to keep him company nor eat with him)

the prince neglected utterly this sentence of the bishop. It fortuned, the prince was invited of the excommunicated man to a feast, and returning thence, met in the way the bishop ; at whose sight the king, being much afraid, lighted off from his horse (as the bishop also incontinently did), falling down before the bishop's feet and asking pardon. The bishop, being offended with the king for the evil example he gave, touching him lying on the ground with the rod he held in his hand, protested unto him with a loud voice and with episcopal authority, saying : ' I tell you, because you would not refrain from the house of that wicked and damnable person, in that house you shall die.' Yet it is to be thought that such a death of so virtuous a man did not only wipe away this fault, but also increased his merit, because he was slain for virtue's sake and for observing God's commandments. . . .

To this Sigberht, Swidhelm son to Sexbald succeeded in the kingdom, and was baptized of the bishop Cedd in East Anglia, in a town of the king's called Rendlesham. Æthilwald, king of the East Angles, brother to Anna their former king, was godfather to this Swidhelm. . . .

(24) In those days king Oswiu, after often and cruel invasions of the heathen unmerciful prince Penda, forced of necessity, offered him many and most precious jewels, with an infinite sum of treasure, to purchase quiet and peace to his country and to cease the continual wasting and cruel spoils that he made. But the heathen and barbarous tyrant, yielding nothing to his request and petition, but pursuing his deadly enterprise and protesting utterly to extinguish the whole nation from the highest to the lowest, the virtuous king called for the help of God against the barbarous impiety of his enemy, vowing and saying : ' Since the infidel regardeth not our presents, let us offer them to our Lord God, who will undoubtedly regard them.' And withal he vowed that if he had the upper hand of his enemy, his young daughter should be consecrated to God in perpetual virginity, and twelve farm-places with the lands appertaining should

be converted to the erecting of monasteries; which being said, he prepared himself to battle with a very small army. The army of the heathen is reported to have been thirty times more in quantity, containing thirty whole legions well appointed and governed with old tried and valiant aldormen and captains. Against all the which, king Oswiu with his son Alhfrid marched forth boldly, though with a very small army (as we said) yet with a sure confidence in Christ. His other son Ecgfrid was at that time kept as an hostage in Mercia with queen Cynwise. Oedilwald, son to king Oswald, who ought of all reason to have stood with his country and uncle king Oswiu, forsook both, and became a captain under the heathen prince, although, when the field was begun, he departed aside, and getting him to a hold awaited the event of the battle. Thus meeting and coupling together, the heathen were put to flight and slain, and the thirty captains who had come to aid Penda were almost all killed, among the which was Æthilhere, brother to Anna, king of the East Angles, then reigning after his brother, who also had been the chief and principal cause of the war. And whereas the field was fought nigh to the river Winwaed, it did at that time so overflow all the banks and fields about, that in the flight more of the enemies were drowned in the water than slain with the sword. . . .

This war king Oswiu concluded in the country of Loidis in the thirteenth year of his reign, the 17th of the Kalends of December, to the great quiet and commodity both of all his dominions and of the adversary too. For his own country he set at rest and delivered from the cruel invasions of his deadly enemies, and his adversaries the Mercians and men of adjacent provinces he brought to the faith of Christ, their wicked head being once cut off. . . .

At what time he gave to Peada, son to Penda the heathen, because he was his cousin, the kingdom of South Mercia, containing (as men say) five thousand families, divided by the river Trent from the North Mercians, whose land containeth seven thousand families or households. But the

same Peada, the next spring after, was traitorously slain by the treason (as they say) of his own wife, in the very time of Easter. Three years after the victory of Oswiu and the death of Penda the heathen, the aldormen of Mercia, Immin, Eafa and Eadberht, rebelled against king Oswiu, advancing to the crown Wulfhere, son to Penda, a young man whom until that time they had kept privy; thus expelling the aldormen set over them by king Oswiu, who was not their natural king, they recovered again valiantly their liberty and their lands, living from that time forward free under a king of their own blood, and serving joyfully the true King of all Kings, Christ.

XIV. CELTIC TRADITION OF THE DEATH OF PENDA.

From the *Historia Brittonum*, cc. 64, 65.

Oswiu son of Æthilfrid (*Osguid filius Eadlfrid*) ruled twenty-eight years and six months. While he ruled, and while Cadwallader (*Catgualart*) ruled the Britons after his father [Cadwallon], came the pestilence: and in that Cadwallader died. Oswiu killed Penda (*Pantha*) in the field of Gai,¹ and now took place the slaughter of the field of Gai; and the king of the Britons were slain, who had gone forth with king Penda in the campaign as far as the city which is called Iudeu.

At that time Oswiu [had] surrendered all the wealth, which was with him in that city, into the hand of Penda. And Penda distributed it to the kings of the Britons, that is *Atbret Iudeu* (The restoration of Iudeu). But Catgabail (= Battle-eager) king of Gwynedd (*rex Guenedotae regionis*) alone escaped with his host, rising up by night. Wherefore he was called *Catgabail Catguommed* (battle-shunning Battle-eager). Ecgrid son of Oswiu (*Osbri*) reigned nine² years. In his time S. Cuthbert the bishop died in the island of Medcaut

¹ Bede's Winwaed, 655.

² Really fifteen. For the possible significance of this, see above, p. 105.

(Lindisfarne).¹ It is this Ecgfrid who made the war against the Picts, and fell therein.

Annales Cambriae.

[656-8] Slaughter of the field of Gai.² Death of Pantha. Oswiu (*Osguid*) came and carried off the plunder.

Annals of Tigernach.

[650 : repeated under 656.²] Battle of Oswiu (*Ossu*) against Penda (*Panta*) in which Penda fell with thirty kings.

XV. THE SYNOD OF WHITBY (664).

From the *Life of Wilfrid* by Eddi (also called Stephen).

We learn from Eddi himself, and from Bede, that Wilfrid brought him to Northumbria as *cantor*, from Kent, the only part of England, at that date, where the art of ecclesiastical singing was properly understood. This was in 669, and Eddi remained in close touch with his hero till Wilfrid's death forty years later, though Eddi's duties as choir master among the Northumbrian churches must often have separated them : Eddi probably wrote the life at Ripon, shortly after 710.

Eddi was therefore not present at the Synod, and probably writes what he learnt from Wilfrid.

Eddi's *Life* was printed by Raine, *Historians of the Church of York* (Rolls Series).

In the days of Colman, metropolitan bishop of York, and in the reign of Oswiu and Alhfrid his son, the abbots and priests and all ranks of the church came together in the monastery which is called Streuneshalgh. There were present the Abbess Hilda ; the two kings ; two bishops, Colman and Ægilberht ; and they enquired what was the proper time for keeping Easter. . . . [Eddi gives two very brief speeches, by Colman on the Celtic side, and by Wilfrid on the Roman].

Then, when Wilfrid had ended, king Oswiu, smiling, asked them all : 'Tell me, which is greater in the kingdom of heaven, Columba or the Apostle Peter?' And the whole Synod replied, with one voice and consent : 'That the Lord

¹ Cuthbert really died on Farne.

² Bede's Winwaed, 655.

decided, when he said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And to thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou dost bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." ' The king made answer wisely: ' He keeps the gate and holds the keys; I make no controversy with him, nor do I accord with those who make it, and in no wise in my life will I contradict his judgments.'

XVI. ARCHBISHOP THEODORE AND BISHOP CHAD.

From Bede's *History*, IV, 1-3.

After the death of Deusdedit, the first English archbishop, Wighard, an Englishman, was sent to Rome to receive the pallium as archbishop of Canterbury :

. . . Being arrived at Rome, in the time that Vitalianus governed the Apostolic See, and having declared the cause of his coming to the said Pope, within short space, he and almost all his company were taken with the pestilence and died. Whereupon the Pope, with advice and counsel, enquired diligently whom he might direct for archbishop over the churches of England. In the Niridan monastery not far from Naples in Campania, there was an abbot named Hadrian, an African born, a man very well learned in the scriptures, thoroughly instructed both in monastical discipline and in ecclesiastical government, very skilful both of the Greek and Latin tongues. This man, being called to the Pope, was willed of him to take the bishopric upon him, and travel unto England. But he, answering that he was no meet man for so high a degree, promised yet to bring one, which both for his learning, and for his age, were more worthy of that vocation . . . At this time there was in Rome a certain monk of Hadrian's acquaintance, named Theodore, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, a man both in profane and divine knowledge, and in the Greek and Latin tongue, excellently learned, in manners and conversation virtuous, and for age reverend, being then/

sixty-six years old. Him Hadrian offered and presented to the Pope, and obtained that he was created bishop : yet, with these conditions, that Hadrian should accompany him into England, because, having twice before travelled into Gaul for diverse matters, he had therefore more experience in that journey, as also for that he was sufficiently furnished with men of his own. But chiefly, that, assisting him always in preaching the Gospel, he should give diligent eye, and watch that this Theodore, being a Greek born, introduced not, after the manner of the Greeks, any doctrine contrary to the true faith received, into the English Church now subject unto him. Theodore therefore, being made sub-deacon, tarried yet in Rome four months, until his hair was full grown, to take the ecclesiastical tonsure round, which before he had taken like unto the Eastern Church, after the manner of S. Paul. He was consecrated bishop of Vitalianus the Pope, in the year of our Lord 668, the 7th of the Kalends of April, upon a Sunday. After, the 6th of the Kalends of June, in the company of Hadrian the abbot, he was directed to England. . . .

(2) Theodore came to his Church the second year after his consecration, the 6th of the Kalends of June, being Sunday, and continued in the same twenty-one years, three months and twenty-six days. And straightway he visited all the country, over wheresoever any English people dwelled (for all men did most gladly receive and hear him) and having still with him the company and help of Hadrian in all things, did sow abroad and teach the right ways and paths of good living, and the canonical rite and order of keeping the feast of Easter. For he was the first archbishop unto whom the whole church of the English nation did consent to submit themselves. And because both he and Hadrian, as we have said, were exceeding well learned both in profane and holy literature, they gathered a company of disciples or scholars unto them, into whose breasts they daily did pour the flowing waters of wholesome knowledge. So that, beside the expounding of holy scripture unto them, they did withal instruct their hearers in the sciences of metre, astronomy, and arithmetic. In the tongues

they so brought up their scholars that even to this day some of them yet living can speak both the Latin and Greek tongue as well as their own in which they were born. Neither was there, ever since the Englishmen came first to Britain, any time more happy than that. For England then had most valiant and Christian princes: it was feared of all barbarous and foreign nations. The people at home was all wholly bent to the late joyful tidings of the kingdom of heaven. . . .

Again at this time the tunes and notes of singing in the Church, which until then were only used and known in Kent, began to be learned through all the churches of England. The first master of song in the churches of Northumberland (except James whom we spoke of before) was Eddi, surnamed Stephen, who was called and brought from Kent by Wilfrid, a man most reverend. . . .

Thus Theodore, viewing over and visiting each where, did in convenient places appoint bishops. . . . When he reproved bishop Chad, for that he was not rightly consecrated, he made most humble answer and said: 'If you think that I have taken the office of a bishop, not in due order and manner, I am ready with all my heart to give up the same, for I did not think myself ever worthy thereof.' . . . Which humble answer of his, Theodore hearing, said he should not leave his bishopric, but did himself supply and complete his consecration in the right and due Catholic manner. . . . At that time Wulfhere, king of the Mercians, after the death of Jaruman, desired to have another bishop appointed for him and his. But Theodore would not consecrate them a new bishop, but desired king Oswiu, that Chad might be their bishop, who at that time lived quietly in his monastery at Lastingham. . . . And because the said most reverend bishop Chad was wont always to preach and do the work of the Gospel, more walking a foot where he went than on horseback, Theodore willed him to ride. . . . But he, refusing utterly so to do, for the exceeding desire and love that he had of that holy labour and travail, Theodore himself did lift him on horseback with his own hands. . . .

XVII. THE CONVERSION OF THE SOUTH SAXONS BY WILFRID.

From Bede's *History*, IV, 13.

When Wilfrid was put out of his bishopric, he went and wandered in many places a long time, and came to Rome, and from thence returned to England again. And though, because of the displeasure of the king [Ecgfrid of Northumbria], he could not get into his own diocese again . . . he went to the province of the South Saxons . . . which contains seven thousand 'families' [= hides of land] and was yet at that time living in the paynims law. Unto them all did he minister the word of faith and baptism of salvation. . . .

The bishop also, when he came into the country, and saw so great a plague of famine there, taught them to get their sustenance by fishing. For the sea and rivers there about them had great abundance of fish. But the people had no skill at all to fish for anything but eels. And therefore they of the bishop's company gat eel-nets together, and cast them into the sea, and straightway by the help and grace of God they took three hundred fishes of diverse kinds. The which they divided into three parts, and gave one hundred to poor folk, and another to them of whom they had the nets, and the third they kept for themselves. By the which benefit the bishop turned the hearts of them all much to love him. . . . At this time did Æthilwalh [king of Sussex] give unto the most reverend bishop Wilfrid the land of eighty-seven 'families,' where he might place his company that were exiles with him. The name of the place was Selsey. . . . When bishop Wilfrid had received this place, he founded a monastery there. . . . And because the king, with the possession of the foresaid place had given him also all the goods and demesnes of the same, with the grounds and men thereto, he instructed them all in the Christian faith, and baptized them all. Among the which there were two hundred and fifty bondmen and bondwomen, whom he did not only deliver, by christening them, from the bondage of the devil, but also by giving them their freedom, did loose them from the yoke of the bondage of man.

XVIII. THE PLAGUE AT JARROW.

From the anonymous *History of the Abbots*, 14, ed. Plummer, in his *Bede*, i., 393.

In the monastery which Ceolfrid ruled [Jarrow] all were swept away who could read, or preach, or recite the antiphons and responses, save the abbot himself and one small lad, nourished and taught by him, who is now a priest in the same monastery, and commends the worthy deeds of the abbot, both by writing and by word of mouth, to all who wish to know them.¹ And the abbot, very sad by reason of the aforesaid visitation, ordained that they should abandon their former rite, and recite their psalms without antiphons, save at vespers and matins. Now when this had been done for the space of one week, among many tears and lamentations of the abbot, he could bear it no longer, but decreed again that the customary course of the antiphons and psalms should be restored. All helped; and by means of himself and the boy of whom I have spoken, he carried out with no small labour that which he had decreed, until he could either train others to help in the divine service, or procure them from elsewhere.

XIX. THE DOWNFALL OF NORTHUMBRIA: BATTLE OF DUNNICHEN MOSS (NECHTANSMERE).

From Bede's *History*, IV, 24 (26).

The same king [Egfrid of Northumbria], against the advice and counsel of his friends, and specially of Cuthbert, a man of blessed memory, who of late had been consecrated bishop, did rashly and undiscreeetly go forth with an army to waste the province of the Picts. Who, making as though they fled, brought him unto the straits of the hills, where there was no passage; and there, with the most part of the host that he had brought with him, he was slain, the fortieth year of his age, and fifteenth of his reign. . . . After which time, the

¹ Very probably Bede himself.

hope and prowess of the dominion of the English began much to decay and go backward. For the Picts recovered again their lands and possessions which the Englishmen did hold; and the Scots that were in Britain, and also a certain part of the Britons, got again their freedom and liberty, which they have continued to hold these forty-six years. . . . After king Ecgfrid succeeded Aldfrid, a man very well learned in the scriptures, who was said to be Ecgfrid's brother, and son to king Oswiu: this man did nobly and worthily recover the decayed and destroyed estate of the kingdom, though the bounds and greatness thereof were now more narrow. This same year, which was from the incarnation of our Lord 685, died Hlothheri, king of Kent, . . . from wounds in battle against the South Saxons. . . .

From the *Annals of Tigernach*.

Bede's date is confirmed by the fact that May 20th was a Saturday in 685.

Battle of Dunnichen (*Duin Nechtain*, Nechtan's fort) on May 20, a Saturday, in which Ecgfrid son of Oswiu (*Ecgfrith mac Osu*) king of the Saxons, having reigned fifteen years, was slain with a great company of his soldiers by Bruidhi son of Bili, king of Fortrenn [district north of the Forth].

XX. THE BATTLE OF DUNNICHEN MOSS REVEALED TO CUTHBERT.

From the anonymous *Life of S. Cuthbert*, cap. 37.

The date of composition of this anonymous *Life* is fixed by the fact that it was written at the request of the monks of Lindisfarne and their bishop Eadfrid (who became bishop in 698); and that Aldfrid, who died in 705, is referred to as being king of Northumbria (cap. 28). It is therefore not much more than a dozen years later than the event here described.

When king Ecgfrid was ravaging the country of the Picts (where nevertheless he was fated by God's decree to be later

overcome and slain) our holy bishop proceeded to the town of Luel¹ and visited the queen, who was there awaiting the issue of the war. On Saturday, then, at three in the afternoon (as priests and deacons, of whom many are alive to this day, affirm), they were gazing at the city wall, and at a fountain within the city, constructed of old by the Romans in wondrous wise, as their guide Waga, the governor of the city, told them. But the bishop, as he leant upon his staff, bent his face to the ground, and then raised his eyes to heaven with a sigh, and exclaimed: 'Oh! oh! oh! For I deem that the war is finished, and that judgement has been pronounced against our soldiers in their warfare.' All eagerly enquired of him what had happened, and he replied, concealing it from them, though they wished to know it, 'Oh my children, consider how wonderfully changed is the air, and how beyond scrutiny are the judgements of God.' And so, in a few days, they heard announced far and wide the astonishing news of that lamentable battle, which was fought on the same hour of the same day on which it was revealed to S. Cuthbert.

XXI. DEFEAT AND PESTILENCE IN NORTHUMBRIA.

From Bede's *Life of S. Cuthbert*, cap. 27 (*Opera Minora*, ed. Stevenson). The translation is that of Dr. Charles Plummer.

Bede gives, though in other words, the same account of Cuthbert having foretold the battle of Dunnichen Moss, which is told in the anonymous *Life*. Bede continues the tale further, telling how Cuthbert advised the queen to return to York² on the Monday, seeing that it would not be lawful for her to ride in a chariot on the Sunday. He himself would follow, so soon as he had dedicated the church of a neighbouring monastery. Preaching there on the Sunday, Cuthbert admonished the monks to quit them like men, and be strong, remembering the Lord's words, 'Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.' The brethren thought that he was foretelling a return of the plague. Cuthbert went on to tell them how some of the monks of Lindisfarne had come to him one

¹ Carlisle.

² *Regiam Civitatem* (possibly Bamborough).

Christmas Day at his hermitage on Farne Island, and asked him to leave his cell and spend the day with them ; and how he had agreed to do so :

We sat down at table. But it chanced that in the middle of our repast I said to them : ' I beseech you, brethren, let us live cautiously and watchfully, lest perchance through carelessness or over-security we be led into temptation.' And they replied : ' Beseech thee, let us spend to-day in gladness, for it is the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And I said : ' Let us do so.' And afterwards, when we had spent a little time in feasting, mirth and talk, I began once more to exhort that we should be instant in prayers and vigils, and prepared to resist all onsets of temptation. And they answered : ' Thy counsel is good, nay, excellent ; but still there are days enough and to spare of fastings and prayers and vigils. Let us this one day be joyful in the Lord. For the angel too, when the Lord was born, brought to the shepherds good tidings of great joy which should be to all people.' And I said : ' Good ; let us do so.' But when, as we were feasting and spending the day in gladness, I began a third time to repeat the same words of warning, then they understood that it was not for nought that I was so insistent on this theme, and in terror they said : ' Let us do as thou advisest ; for some great necessity is laid upon us of girding up our spiritual loins to watch against the wiles of the Devil and all temptations.' And I, in saying this, knew no more than they, that any special trial was about to assail us ; only I was admonished by some instinctive feeling that we must ever fortify our hearts against the sudden storms of temptation. But when the next morning they left me, and returned to their own monastery of Lindisfarne, behold, they found that one of their members had died of the plague ; which increased and raged for days and months, until within the year almost the whole of that noble company of fathers and brethren had departed to the Lord.

And now, brethren, do ye watch in prayer ; that if any tribulation come upon you, it may not find you unprepared.

XXII. FROM THE LAWS OF HLOTHHERI AND EADRIC
(KENTISH, c. 685).

Liebermann, I, 9, etc. : Attenborough, 18, etc.

Like the Laws of Æthilberht, above, and those of Wihtred below, (Chap. V, Extract III), these Laws are extant only in a Twelfth Century transcript, which has modernized the Old English in which they were written.

Hlothheri and Eadric, kings of Kent, increased the laws which their predecessors had made, by these dooms which are stated hereafter:

1. If a man's servant slay a man of noble birth, one whose wergeld is 300 shillings, the owner shall give up the manslayer, and pay in addition the value of three men [presumably of three slaves]. *Confess. to him soey. got. 300 shillings.*

2. If the manslayer escape, the owner shall add the value of a fourth man, and by good witnesses shall prove that he could not lay hands upon the slayer.

3. If a man's servant slay a free man whose wergeld is 100 shillings, the owner shall give up the manslayer, and therto shall pay the value of another man. . . .

8. If a man make a plaint against another, and he meet the man in assembly or meeting place, the man shall provide him with security, and do such right as the judges of Kent shall prescribe to them. . . .

11. If a man in the house of another call a man perjured, or greet him shamefully with evil words, he shall pay one shilling to him who owns the house, 6 shillings to him to whom he spake the word, and 12 shillings to the king.

12. If, where men are drinking, one man seize the cup from another without provocation, he shall, in accordance with ancient custom, give a shilling to him who owns the house, 6 shillings to the man whose cup was seized, and 12 shillings to the king. . . .

15. If a man for three nights entertain a stranger in his house, be it a merchant, or anyone who has come over the border, and give him food, and the stranger do harm to any

man, his host shall bring him to justice, or make atonement on his behalf.

16. If a man of Kent buy property in London, let him take unto himself two or three trustworthy 'churls' as witnesses, or the reeve of the king's demesne. . . .

XXIII. CEADWALLA OF WESSEX GOES TO ROME: DEATH OF ARCHBISHOP THEODORE.

From Bede's *History*, V, 7, 8.

The third year of king Aldfrid's reign, Ceadwalla, king of the West Saxons, when he had kept the sovereignty of his country very stoutly for two years space, for God's sake and hope of an eternal kingdom in heaven, forsook his own upon earth, and went to Rome. . . . Withal, this hope he conceived, that as soon as by baptism he was cleansed from sin, and made a member of Christ's mystical body, he should depart from this world to the eternal joy; the which both by the providence of God were fulfilled even as he had secretly in his mind determined before: for coming to Rome when Sergius was Pope, he was baptized on Easter Eve, the year after the incarnation of Christ 689, and wearing yet the white apparel and robes of innocency that were put upon him in baptism, fell sick and died, the 12th of the Kalends of May. . . . And at the Pope's commandment, an epitaph was engraved upon his tomb, after this sort: [The epitaph, in prose and verse, is quoted at length]. . . .

688-7. Ini, one of the king's blood, succeeded, who, after he had reigned there thirty-seven years, gave over his kingdom, and committed the governance of it to younger men, and went himself to the tombs and monuments of the apostles in Rome. . . . Which practice in those days many Englishmen, both of the nobility and commons, spiritual and temporal, men and women, were wont to use with much emulation.

(8) The year after king Ceadwalla died at Rome, that is to say the year of our Lord 690, Archbishop Theodore . . . being very old, . . . to wit four score and eight, departed out of this world. The which number of years that he should

live and see, was signified unto him by revelation in a dream, as to his familiar friends he was wont to make report. . . . Of whom, with the rest of his fellows . . . it may truly be said that 'their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore:' for, that I may use few words, the Church of England, for the time he was archbishop, received so much comfort and increase in spiritual matters as they could never before.

XXIV. DEATHS OF CEADWALLA AND THEODORE.

From the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

Since the *Chronicle* was not drawn up in its present form till two centuries after this period, its chronology only has authority in so far as it is based upon earlier documents. We do not know the origin of those of the following entries which relate to the warfare of Ceadwalla and Mul. The other entries agree with the Chronological Summary which Bede appended to his *History*, and therefore have contemporary authority. They have been confirmed by the recent excavations (1924) at S. Augustine's, Canterbury, when the tomb of Hlothheri of Kent was discovered, and also that of Wihtred, for whom see the next chapter. It also appeared that the men of Kent, after burning Mul, had given his ashes Christian burial in Canterbury. All three tombs may now be seen there.

685. Ceadwalla began to strive after the kingdom [of Wessex]. . . . And Mul, who was afterwards burnt in Kent, was the brother of Ceadwalla. And the same year king Ecgferth [of Northumbria] was slain. . . . And Hlothhere [king of Kent] died in the same year.

686. Ceadwalla and Mul ravaged Kent and Wight.

687. Mul was burnt in Kent, and twelve other men with him. And the same year Ceadwalla again ravaged Kent.

688. Ine succeeded to the kingdom of the West Saxons, and held it seven and thirty winters. And the same year Ceadwalla went to Rome, and received baptism from the pope, and the pope named him Peter. And after seven nights he died. . . .

690. Archbishop Theodore died, and Beorhtwald succeeded to the bishopric. Before that, the bishops had been Romans : after that, they were English.

CHAPTER V.

THE EIGHTH CENTURY (690-796).

SUPREMACY OF MERCIA.

- I. From the *West Saxon Annals*, 694-796.
- II. From the Laws of Ine of Wessex, c. 690.
- III. From the Laws of Wihtred of Kent, c. 695.
- IV. Redeeming a slave-girl: Letter from Brihtwald, Archbishop of Canterbury, to Forthere, bishop of Sherborne.
- V. *The Ecclesiastical History*: Bede's patron and helpers.
- VI. The state of England about 731, from Bede's *History*.
- VII. The death of Bede, a letter from Cuthbert.
- VIII. From the *Northumbrian 'Gesta,'* 737-796.
- IX. S. Boniface reproves the king of Mercia.
- X. From the letters of Alcuin.
- XI. Correspondence of Charles the Great and Offa: A peccant priest; Tariffs and Presents.
- XII. Pope Leo III to Coenwulf of Mercia.
- XIII. Canterbury vindicated.
- XIV. Some titles of the kings of Mercia.

THE supremacy of Mercia must not be pressed too far as a special characteristic of the Eighth Century. In the Seventh Century, Penda and Wulphere had been suzerains over many kingdoms south of the Humber, and Cœnwulf continued to wield considerable power in the Ninth Century: Mercia was not finally broken till a king of Mercia, and his five aldormen with him, fell in one battle in 827. Neither is the Eighth Century *entirely* one of Mercian supremacy. The way for this supremacy had, it is true, been cleared by the downfall of Northumbria in 685. But Wessex, on the other hand, was for nearly forty years under the vigorous rule of Ine,

whom we find at the outset of our period settling the quarrel about the burning of Mul, which all Ceadwalla's violence had failed to bring to a satisfactory conclusion. Till Ine went to Rome in 726, Wessex seems to have remained a formidable rival to Mercia. But, with these limitations, we may note that the reigns of the two great Mercian kings, Æthelbald and Offa, cover eighty years (716-796), and that the titles which these two kings claim in their charters are noteworthy. (See *Extract XIV*. For a full statement of the evidence which can be derived from this source, see F. M. Stenton, 'The Supremacy of the Mercian Kings,' *English Historical Review*, XXXIII, 433, Oct., 1918.)

The early years of the century are those of Bede's maturity, so that his *History* is now strictly contemporary. It does not, however, thereby increase in interest. This is not the fault of Bede. The period of the Conversion, and of the greatness of Northumbria, which it was his task to chronicle, had both passed away in his childhood, and there were comparatively few contemporary events which it was satisfactory to him to record.

With the close of the *Ecclesiastical History* in 731, information becomes scanty. Some manuscripts of the *History* have a brief Chronicle added, which carries on the story during thirty-six years. The *prima facie* deduction is that the continuation was completed at the end of that time, as there is no obvious reason why a continuator, if he lived much later, should have gone as far as the year 766 and stopped there. Nevertheless, this continuation has so many doubtful features that we cannot accept it as a contemporary record, except for the first four years, which have very early manuscript authority. During these years Bede was still alive, and he may possibly have made these entries himself. But, beyond this, the entries occur only in very few and late manuscripts: they seem to be the work of some much later scribe, and the reason why they are carried no further than 766 may be that the continuator grew weary of his task. One of the doubtful things about this continuation is that

it gives the year of the *accession* of king Cynewulf of Wessex (757) as that of his *death*, which did not really occur till some thirty years later. We find the explanation when we note that, in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, it is under the year of Cynewulf's *accession* that the story of his murder is told (see below, *Extract I*). The continuator of Bede must have used carelessly either the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, or perhaps one of its sources, in which this feature occurred. In any case, this puts the continuator so much later than 766 that the deduction we might naturally draw from his stopping in that year must be abandoned.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, as drawn up just about 890, is however our chief source of information: and how scanty it is, is shown by the fact that its record for the whole century can be compressed within about half a dozen octavo pages. Its entries are doubtless taken from older chronicles, and with certain limitations, mentioned below, seem to be reliable; but they are, with the one exception of the story of the death of Cynewulf, merely dated records of events the details of which are for ever lost.

Help can also be got from the *Northumbrian 'Gesta.'* These are preserved in two ways. They were used to supplement a manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which was sent to some Northern monastery. Owing to this, extracts from the *Gesta* are now found in MSS. D and E of the *Chronicle*. The *Gesta* were subsequently used in the compilation which goes under the name of Simeon of Durham. These *Gesta* may have begun where Bede left off: if they began earlier in the century, they were (naturally) not much used by the *Chronicle* or 'Simeon' till after 731, when Bede failed them. From that point till the end of the century, the *Gesta* are our authority for Northumbrian history. They are melancholy reading: a record of assassinations and usurpations. This source of information ceases in 'Simeon' with the year 802, and in the *Chronicle* with 806. Presumably, then, the *Gesta* were not kept up beyond the opening years of the Ninth Century. There is no reason to suppose that their compilation

is much later than this: we need not be sceptical because the *Gesta* record that dragons flying in the air heralded the sack of Lindisfarne. (J. J. Scheuchzer, in *Itinera per Helvetiæ Alpinas regiones*, 1723, gives examples of dragons authenticated by ministers of religion, his own contemporaries, and supplies woodcuts in illustration.) The most interesting episode in the *Gesta* is the unsuccessful execution of Eardulf before the gates of Ripon monastery. Plummer thinks that Ripon may be the home of the *Gesta*.

The glories on the Continent of the reign of Charles the Great (768-814) coincide with what is one of the most obscure periods of English history: so that valuable sidelights can be gained, especially from the correspondence of Alcuin (735-804), the Northumbrian scholar at the court of Charles.

I. FROM THE WEST SAXON ANNALS, 694-796.

From the *Parker* or A-manuscript of the *Chronicle*.

694. The men of Kent made terms with Ine, and gave him thirty thousand, because they had burnt Mul.¹ And Wihtréd succeeded to the kingdom of Kent, and held it thirty-three² winters. . . .

704. Æthelred, son of Penda, king of the Mercians, became a monk: he had held the kingdom twenty-nine³ winters. Then Coenred succeeded.

¹ The unit in which payment was made for Mul is not clear. Æthelwerd says, '30,000 solidi, each consisting of 16 nummi;' 30,000 of these 'shillings of sixteen pence' would perhaps be about equivalent to that number of cattle. This is much more than the normal wergeld of a prince of the blood royal, which seems to have been 30,000 pence. (See Chadwick, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Institutions*, 16-17.) But Æthelwerd is not necessarily mistaken: after a long and bloody resistance Kent may have been compelled to pay an indemnity far in excess of any individual wergeld. For the burning of Mul, see above, p. 171.

² To 725 is only 31 years: the discrepancy is accounted for by *Chronicle* E, which tells us that Wihtréd had already reigned since 692 as joint king.

³ This seems to be correct. Bede in his summary says '31': but the year of accession was 675; and as both Bede and the *Chronicle* agree upon this, and also upon the year of abdication, it necessitates 29.

705. Aldferth, king of the Northumbrians, died. . . .

709. Ceolred succeeded to the kingdom of the Mercians, and Coenred went to Rome, and Offa¹ with him.

714. S. Guthlac died. . . .

716. . . . Ceolred, king of the Mercians, died, and his body rests in Lichfield, and that of Æthelred, son of Penda, in Bardney; then Æthelbald succeeded to the kingdom in Mercia, and held it for 41 winters. . . .

725. Wihtred, king of Kent, died. . . . And Ine fought against the South Saxons, and there slew Aldbryht.

726.² Ine went to Rome, and Æthelheard succeeded to the kingdom of the West Saxons. . . .

734. Bede died. . . .³

[757]⁴ Cynewulf and the 'witan' of the West Saxons deprived Sigebryht of his kingdom for his unrighteous deeds, all save Hampshire; and that he held till he slew the aldorman who dwelt with him longest; and then Cynewulf drove him into Andred, and there he dwelt till a herdsman stabbed him at Privet; the herdsman did this to avenge the aldorman Cumbra.

And this Cynewulf often fought great battles against the Britons. And after he had ruled thirty-one winters, he wished to drive out an ætheling who was named Cyneheard; and this Cyneheard was the brother of Sigebryht. Then Cyneheard learnt that the king was at *Merantun*, in the company of a woman, with but a small retinue. And there he surrounded him, and beset the bower round about, before

¹ King of Essex.

² The *Parker MS.* says '728,' but other *Chronicles*, C, D, E, give '726' correctly.

³ Probably an error for 735.

⁴ From the middle of the Eighth to the middle of the Ninth Century all our extant manuscripts of the *Chronicle* are some two years behind. This is clear from such of the events recorded as can be tested from other documents: e.g. the battle between the Franks and the Old Saxons in 782. But the dates were given correctly, as Dr. Plummer has proved (*Chronicles*, II, § 100) in a lost version, older than any now extant. The error must have crept in in transcription, but at a very early date. I have accordingly put the dates two years forward, in the remainder of this extract, but between square brackets.

the king's retinue knew of it. Then the king perceived that, and he went to the door, and defended himself valiantly, till he saw the ætheling; then he rushed out upon him, and wounded him sorely. And they were all fighting against the king till they had slain him.

Then the outcry of the woman aroused the king's retinue; and thither they ran, each as soon as he could; and to each of them the ætheling offered life and wealth; and not one of them would take it. But they fought until they all lay dead, save one British hostage; and he was sorely wounded.

Then in the morning the main body of the king's thanes, who had been left behind, heard that the king was slain; then they rode thither, and his aldorman Osric, and Wiferth his thane. And they found the ætheling in the place: the king was lying dead inside. And they went to the gates, which the ætheling had closed against them. And the ætheling offered them wealth and land, as much as they chose, if they would grant him the kingdom; and his men said that their kinsmen were with him, who would not desert him. But the king's men replied that no kinsman was dearer to them than their lord, and that they would never follow their lord's slayer; but they made an offer to their kinsmen that *they* might depart safe and sound. The ætheling's men made answer that an offer like that had been made to the retinue who had been with the king, and that they for their part recked no more of it 'than did your comrades who were slain with the king.' And they fought at the gate, till they forced their way in, and slew the ætheling, and his men, all save one. That one was the godson of the aldorman [Osric], and his godfather saved his life, though he was often wounded.

And this Cynewulf reigned thirty-one winters, and his body lies at Winchester, and the body of the ætheling at Axminster; and their kin goes back to Cerdic. And the same year¹

¹ That is, the year of Cynewulf's accession, not, of course, of his murder. The *Continuation to Bede* gives, under the year 757, some details of the death of Æthelbald. He was slain 'by his guard, at night, in treacherous and wretched wise.'

Æthelbald, king of the Mercians, was slain at *Seccandun*, and his body lies at Repton; and Beornred succeeded, and held the kingdom for a short time and unhappily. The same year Offa succeeded, and held the kingdom thirty-nine winters. And his son Ecgferth held it one hundred and forty-one days. . . .

[775] A red cross of Christ was seen in the heavens after sundown. And this year the Mercians and the men of Kent fought at Otford. And wonderful adders were seen in Sussex.

[779] Cynewulf and Offa fought at Bensington, and Offa took the place.

[782] The Old Saxons and the Franks fought.

[786] Cyneheard slew king Cynewulf, and was there himself slain, and 84 men with him. And then Beorhtric succeeded to Wessex, and he ruled 16 years. And his body lies at Wareham, and his kin goes back to Cerdic.

[787] The contentious Synod of Chelsea.¹ And archbishop Ianberht forwent some of his rights, and Hygeberht was chosen by king Offa [to be archbishop of Lichfield]. And Ecgferth was hallowed king.

[789] [*For this extract see next chapter.*] . . .

[794] Offa, king of the Mercians, bade strike off the head of king Æthelberht [of East Anglia].

[796] Pope Adrian and king Offa died: and Æthelred, king of the Northumbrians, was slain by his own people.

II. FROM THE LAWS OF INE OF WESSEX, c. 690.

Liebermann, I, 88, etc. : Attenborough, 36, etc.

The mention of Erconwald, the famous bishop of London, who died before, or in, 694, shows that these laws belong to the earlier part of the long reign of Ine (688-726). They are appended to the Laws of Alfred, and, like them, are extant in Eleventh Century transcripts which have modified the older English of Ine.

1. I, Ine, by the grace of God king of Wessex, with the counsel and teaching of Cenred my father, of Hedde my

¹ When Lichfield was made an archbishopric at the expense of Canterbury. See *Extract XIII*, 'Canterbury vindicated.'

bishop, and of Erconwald my bishop, with all my aldormen and the chief 'witan' of my people, and also with a great assembly of the servants of God, have been considering concerning the salvation of our souls and the stability of our realm, that right law and just dooms may be made fast and firm among our people, so that none of the aldormen, nor of our subjects, after this should pervert these our dooms. . . .

2. A child must be baptized within thirty nights; if not, 30 shillings shall be paid; but if the child die unbaptized, [the father] must make it good with all that he possesses.

3. If a slave work on Sunday by his lord's command, he shall go free, and his lord shall pay 30 shillings fine. If however the slave work without his lord's knowledge, he shall be flogged, or pay the fine corresponding. But if a free man work on that day without his lord's command, he shall lose his freedom or pay 60 shillings; and a priest two-fold.

5. If anyone is guilty of death, and flee to the church, he shall save his life, paying the just compensation. . . .

6. If anyone fight in the king's house, he shall forfeit all he has, and it shall be at the king's decision whether he live or die. If in a monastery, he shall pay 120 shillings. If in the house of an aldorman, or eminent member of the 'witan,' 60 shillings compensation [to him], and 60 shillings fine. . . . And even though it be fought in the open field, a fine of 120 shillings shall be paid.

7. If anyone steal, so that his wife know it not, nor his children, he shall pay a fine of 60 shillings. But if his household know, they shall all go into slavery. A child of ten can be an accomplice in theft.

8. If anyone demand justice in the presence of any 'shireman' or of another judge, and cannot obtain it, since the accused will not give him security, the accused shall pay 30 shillings compensation, and within seven nights do him justice.

11. If anyone sell one of his own countrymen, bond or free, though he be guilty, oversea, he shall pay for it with his [own] wergeld, and make full atonement unto God.

12. If a thief be taken, he shall die the death; or his life shall be redeemed by his wergeld. . . .

13. We call men thieves up to the number of seven; from 7 to 35 is a 'gang'; above 35 an army (*here*).

14. He who is accused of belonging to a 'gang' shall clear himself with an oath of 120 hides, or pay the compensation corresponding.

19. A member of the king's household, if his wergeld is 1200 shillings, and if he is a communicant, may swear for 60 hides.¹

20. If a man from afar, or a stranger, travel through a wood off the path, and neither shout nor blow his horn, he may be assumed to be a thief, and as such either slain or put to ransom.

24. If an Englishman living in penal slavery steal away, he shall be hanged, and nought shall be paid to his lord. . . .

A Welshman, if he have five hides of land, his wergeld shall be 600 shillings.

26. To maintain a foundling, 6 shillings shall be given in the first year, 12 in the second, 30 in the third; afterwards according to his looks.

32. If a Welshman possesses a hide of land, his wergeld shall be 120 shillings; if he possess half a hide, 80 shillings; if no land, 60 shillings.

33. A Welsh horseman of the king, who can ride the king's errands, his wergeld is 200 shillings.

35. He who slays a thief may declare under oath that he slew him as a thief trying to escape; and the kinsmen of the slain shall swear to carry on no feud against the slayer. But if the slayer keep it secret and it afterwards becomes known, he must pay for him.

¹ Oaths were valued according to a man's status; thus two men of this standing would suffice to clear a man accused under 14, above. The wergelds show that there are three main classes of freemen in Wessex: 200-shilling men, 600-shilling men and 1200-shilling men. (See 70, below.) This does not mean that West Saxons were more valuable than men of Kent. For the Wessex shilling was only about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Kentish shilling: the price of a sheep as against that of an ox.

36. He who takes a thief, or to whom a thief taken is given, and who then lets him go or conceals the theft, must pay for the thief by his wergeld. If he be an aldorman, he shall lose his shire, unless the king will have mercy upon him.

39. If anyone without leave depart from his lord, or steal away into another shire, if discovered he shall return, and shall pay his lord 60 shillings.

40. A churl's holding must be fenced both winter and summer. If not, and a neighbour's beast strays in through the gap, the churl has no claim; let him drive the beast out and suffer the loss.

42. If churls have a meadow in common, or other partible land to fence, and some have fenced their part but some have not, and [stray cattle] eat up their common crops or grass, those who own the unfenced part shall go, and compensate for the damage the others, who have fenced their part. Then [those who have failed to fence their part] shall ask from the owners of the cattle such amends as may be right. If, however, any beast breaks through the hedges, and its owner cannot or will not control it, he who finds it in his field may take it and slay it. The owner shall take its hide and flesh, and lose the rest.

43. When a man destroys a tree in a wood by fire, and it becomes known who did it, he shall pay the full fine. He shall pay 60 shillings, because fire is a thief. If he fells very many trees in a wood, and it later becomes manifest, he shall pay for three trees, each with 30 shillings.¹ He need not pay for more, be they as many as they may. For an axe is an informer, and not a thief.

44. If, however, a man cut down a tree that 30 swine may stand under, and it becomes manifest, he shall pay 60 shillings.

45. For breaking the peace of a fortified house of the king, or of a bishop within his bishopric, 120 shillings compensation

¹ A fine to the king, not compensation to the owner, since trees would hardly have been so valuable, and Alfred's laws show that, in fact, they were not.

shall be paid; of an aldorman, 80 shillings; of a king's thane, 60 shillings; of a noble landholder, 35 shillings. The accusation can be denied by oaths equivalent.

51. If a noble landholder neglects military service, he shall pay 120 shillings and forfeit his land; an unlanded nobleman 60 shillings; a 'churl' 30 shillings fine for neglecting service.

55. An ewe with her lamb is worth a shilling, until a fortnight after Easter.

63. If a nobleman move his abode, he may take with him his reeve, and his smith, and his children's nurse.

64-6. He who holds 20 hides of land, shall show 12 hides under cultivation, when he wishes to leave; he who holds 10, shall show 6; he who holds 3, shall show 1½.

70. When a wergeld of 200 shillings has to be paid, 30 shillings compensation shall be paid to the man's lord; when 600, 80 shillings compensation; when 1200, 120 shillings.

III. FROM THE LAWS OF WIHTRED OF KENT, c. 695.

Liebermann, I, 12, etc.; Attenborough, 24, etc.

These supplementary Kentish laws seem to have been drawn up about the same time as, or a little later than, the laws of Ine of Wessex, after the long and bloody struggle between Kent and Wessex had been brought to an end by the Peace of Ine. The provision that foreigners who travel off the highway without giving notice of their presence may be treated as thieves, is found in both series of *Laws*, with wording almost identical (Wihtred 28 = Ine 20, q.v.). It looks as if it had been adopted by mutual agreement, to stop raiding.

These are the dooms of Wihtred, king of the men of Kent.

In the fifth year of the reign of the gracious Wihtred, king of the men of Kent, . . . there was assembled a council of the magnates. There was Birhtwald, chief bishop of Britain, and the aforementioned king, and also the bishop of Rochester, named Gefmund, and every order of the church of that tribe spake as of one mind with the loyal people.

There the magnates, with the consent of all, drew up these

dooms, and added them to the just customs of the men of Kent, as it is hereafter said and declared :

3. Men who live in unlawful unions shall turn to righteous life with repentence for their sin, or shall be cut off from the communion of the church.

4. Foreigners, if they will not make their unions lawful, shall depart from the land, with their goods and their sins.

13. If a slave make offerings to devils, he shall pay 6 shillings compensation, or be flogged.

15. If a slave, during a fast, eat meat of his own free will, he shall pay 6 shillings compensation, or be flogged.

16. The word of a bishop, or of a king, even without an oath, shall be beyond dispute.

25. If a man be slain in the act of theft, he shall lie without wergeld.

26. If a free man be caught in theft redhanded, the king shall decide one of three things : either that he be slain, or sold oversea, or redeemed by his wergeld.

IV. REDEEMING A SLAVE-GIRL.

Letter from Brihtwald [Beorhtwald], archbishop of Canterbury, to Forthere, bishop of Sherborne.

From *Monumenta Moguntina*, ed. Jaffé, Berlin, 1866.

Apparently written between 709 and 712. The presence in Wessex of a slave of Kentish family may well be due to the harrying of Kent by Ceadwalla, in revenge for the slaughter of Mul.

. . . Because the request which, in thy presence, I made of the venerable abbot Beorwald [of Glastonbury], concerning the redemption of a slave-girl, who has kinsfolk in our parts, has not had the success which I expected, and because I am again importuned by their prayers, I have deemed it best to send these letters to thee, by a kinsman of the girl, named Eppa. And I beg of thee that thou wilt obtain from the fore-said abbot, that he will accept for the girl three hundred solidi from the hand of the bearer of these presents, and hand her

over to him, to be escorted here, where she may pass the remainder of her life with her kinsfolk, no longer in the sadness of servitude, but in the joy of liberty.

V. 'THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.'

Bede's patron, king Ceolwulf ; and Bede's helpers.

To the right honourable king Ceolwulf, Bede, the servant of Christ, and priest : The History of things done in the church of the English nation, which of late I had set forth, I did formerly very gladly send to your grace, since you desired to have a sight thereof : and now again do send it you, to the intent you may both have it copied out, and more fully at your leisure consider it. I cannot but highly commend this your zeal and good desire you have, not only to give good ear to the holy scriptures, but also to know of things both done and spoken by worthy men before your time, and specially of our own country. . . . And to the intent that I may put both your grace and all other that shall hear or read it out of all doubt of the verity of the said history, I will briefly show you what authors I have chiefly followed in the making thereof. The chiefest author and aider I had in compiling this work, was the right reverend abbot Albinus,¹ a man of great learning, which, being brought up in the church of Canterbury under Theodore, archbishop, of blessed memory, and Hadrian, abbot, both men of great worship and learning, hath procured and sent unto me all such things as were done by S. Gregory the Pope's disciples, either in the province of Kent, or other places adjoining and bordering upon the same. Which things the said abbot hath learned, partly by writings, partly also by tradition of elders ; and such things as he hath in such sort learned, he hath sent unto me by the hands of Nothelm,² priest of the church of London, to be received, either in writing, or by mouth and relation of the said Nothelm. Which Nothelm also, going after unto Rome, was permitted by

¹ Abbot of S. Augustine's, Canterbury.

² Subsequently the tenth archbishop of Canterbury.

Gregory [II] bishop, which is now head of that Church, to search the archives of the said holy church of Rome, where he found out certain epistles of S. Gregory and other bishops there, and at his return hath delivered unto us the said epistles to be put into our history, with the counsel and advice of the reverend father Albinus above mentioned. . . . Which Albinus and Nothelm have also given me in some part knowledge of such things as were done in Essex, Wessex, East Anglia, and Northumbria: to wit by what bishop's preaching, and under what king, each of the said provinces was converted to the faith of Christ. And, to be short, by the exhortation of the said Albinus I was chiefly provoked and emboldened to set upon this enterprise.

Daniel also, the most reverend bishop of the West Saxons, which is yet alive, hath instructed me in certain points of the ecclesiastical history both of his province and of the South Saxons, and of the Isle of Wight. Now in what sort the Mercians received the faith which they knew not before, and the East Saxons recovered the faith which they had lost before, both by the ministry of Cedd and Chad, priests of great devotion, and how the two said fathers both lived and died, we have diligently learned of the brothers of the monastery of Lastingham, by them erected.

Again, of things done appertaining to the church in East Anglia, we have found out partly by monuments of writing and traditions of the forelivers, and partly by the information of the reverend Abbot Esi. As for such things as were done in Lindsey [Lincolnshire] touching the furtherance of the faith of Christ, and what priests there succeeded from time to time, we have learned either from the letters of the reverend bishop Cyniberht, or by the lively voice of other men of good credit. The history of the Northumbrians from the time they received the faith of Christ unto this present, we have gotten not by any one author, but by relation of many faithful witnesses which might know and remember the same, beside such things as by my own experience I knew. . . .

VI. THE STATE OF ENGLAND ABOUT 731.

From Bede's *History*, V, 23.

The year of our Lord 729 appeared two great blazing stars about the sun, making all that beheld them marvellously afraid. For one went before the sun every morning, the other appeared in the evening, straight after the sun was down, presaging, as it were, to the east and west some great destruction. . . . At what time the Saracens wasted and spoiled Gaul with much murder and bloodshed. Who not long after were justly punished in the same country for their spoiling. The same year the holy and good father Egberht died, as we said before, at Easter : straight after Easter king Osric, having the sovereignty of Northumbria, departed out of this life, the 7th of the Ides of May, having reigned eleven years, after he had appointed Ceolwulf, brother to king Coenred his predecessor, to be his successor in the kingdom. The beginning and process of whose reign is so full of troubles, hath had such diverse success of things contrary one to the other, that we cannot yet well tell what may be written of them, nor what end every thing will have. . . .

[A list of the bishops holding sees in the South of England follows.]

All these provinces, and others of the South, even to Humber, with their kings, are in subjection to Æthilbald, king of Mercia. But of Northumbria, where Ceolwulf is king, there are but four bishops : Wilfrid [II] of York, Æthilwald of Lindisfarne, Acca of Hexham, and Pecthelm of Whiterne [in Wigtownshire] which being made a bishop's see of late, when the faithful people began to multiply, hath now this Pecthelm for their first bishop. The Picts also at this time are in league with the Englishmen, and in unity with the Catholic Church. The Scots which inhabit Britain, content to keep their own limits and borders, work no treason towards England. The Britons, albeit for the most part even of privy malice and grudge they malign the Englishmen, and impugn with their lewd manner the time of Easter

ordained by the Catholic Church, yet, the almighty power of God, and man, resisting their malice, they cannot have their purpose. For though they are in some part free, yet for the more part they are in subjection to Englishmen. . . . Thus for this present standeth the whole state of Britain: the year since the Englishmen came into Britain about 285, and 731 since the Incarnation of Christ, in whose reign let the earth always rejoice. . . .

[A Chronological Summary follows, giving the principal events, from the invasion of Julius Cæsar to the date of writing; for example :

716. Osred, king of Northumbria, killed; and Ceolred, king of Mercia, died; and Ecgberht, the man of God, brought the monks of Iona to observe the Catholic Easter and the ecclesiastical tonsure.]

This much concerning the Ecclesiastical History of Britain, and especially of the English nation, as I could learn by the writings of our ancestors, by the tradition of my elders, or by mine own knowledge, I have by the help of God brought unto this order and issue: I, Bede, the servant of God, and priest of the monastery of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow. Being born in the territory of the same monastery, when I was seven years of age I was delivered by the hand of my friends and kinsfolk to be brought up of the most reverend abbot Benedict, and afterwards to Ceolfrid. From the which time, spending all the days of my life in the mansion of the same monastery, I applied all my study to the meditation of holy scripture, and observing withal the regular discipline and keeping the daily singing of God's service in the church, the rest of my time I was delighted always to learn, to teach, or to write.

VII. THE DEATH OF BEDE.

A Letter from Cuthbert, afterwards Abbot of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow. Translated by Dr. Charles Plummer.

For about two weeks before Easter he was troubled with weakness, and especially with difficulty of breathing, yet

without much actual pain. And after that, he continued until Ascension Day cheerful and rejoicing and giving thanks to Almighty God every day and night, yea every hour. He gave lessons daily to us his disciples, and the rest of the day he occupied himself, as far as his strength allowed, in chanting the Psalms, and all the night too he passed cheerfully in prayers and giving of thanks to God, except only when a light slumber hindered him. But again straightway waking up, he would go over, as he was wont, the melodies of Scripture, and stretching out his hands forgot not to give thanks to God. I can with truth declare that I never saw with my eyes, or heard with my ears, any one return thanks so unceasingly to the living God. O truly blessed man! He would recite the saying of the holy apostle Paul: 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God'; and many other things out of Holy Scripture, in which he warned us to arise from the sleep of the soul, by thinking beforehand of our last hour. And in our own tongue also (for he was skilled in our native songs), speaking of the dread departure of the soul from the body, he sang:

'Ere that forced journey, no one may be
More prudent, than him well beseemeth,
If he but meditate, ere his departure,
What to his spirit, of good or evil,
After his deathday, may be decreed.'

He chanted also antiphons for our comfort and his own, whereof one is: 'O King of Glory, Lord of Might, Who didst this day triumphantly ascend far above all heavens, we beseech Thee leave us not comfortless, but send to us the promise of the Father, even the Spirit of truth; Hallelujah.' And when he came to those words, 'we beseech Thee leave us not comfortless,' he burst into tears, and wept much; and after a space he began to repeat again what he had commenced, and we hearing this wept and lamented with him. One while we read, at another time we mourned, or rather we mingled our tears with our reading. In such exaltation of feeling we passed the quinquagesimal tide up to

the aforesaid day. And he greatly rejoiced and gave thanks to God, that he was counted worthy to suffer such weakness. He would often say: 'God scourgeth every son whom He receiveth,' and the saying of St. Ambrose: 'I have not so lived as to be ashamed to live among you; yet neither do I fear to die, for we have a loving Lord.'

In those days moreover, besides the lessons which he gave us daily, and the chanting of the Psalms, there were two works, very worthy of mention, which he laboured to complete; that is, he translated into our language, for the profit of the Church of God, from the beginning of St. John's Gospel to the place where it is said: 'but what are they among so many?' and some extracts from the works of Bishop Isidore, for he said: 'I would not that my children should read a lie, and labour herein without fruit after I am gone.'

But when the Tuesday before Ascension Day arrived, his breathing became much more difficult, and his feet began to swell slightly. But all that day he talked and dictated cheerfully, and among other things he would say from time to time: 'Learn speedily, I know not how long I shall be with you, or whether my Maker will remove me shortly.' We, however, wondered whether perchance he did not well know the time of his departure; and thus in giving of thanks he wakefully passed the night.

And when the morning broke—that is the Wednesday—he bade us write diligently what we had begun, and this we did up to the third hour. But from the third hour we walked in procession with the relics of the saints, as the custom of that day required. One, however, of us remained with him, who said: 'There is still one chapter wanting of the book which thou hast been dictating, and it seems hard for thee to be questioned further.' 'Nay,' said he, 'it is easy, take thy pen, and mend it, and write quickly;' and he did so. But at the ninth hour he said to me: 'I have a few treasures in my casket, that is, some pepper, napkins, and incense; but run quickly and call the priests of our monastery to me, that I

may distribute to them such gifts as God has given me.' And in great agitation I did so. And he addressed them generally and severally, exhorting and beseeching them diligently to offer masses and prayers for him, which they gladly promised. And they all wept and lamented, sorrowing most of all because he had said that they must not reckon to see his face much longer in this world, but rejoicing because he said: 'It is time for me, if it be His will, to return to my Maker, Who formed me, when as yet I was not, out of nothing. I have lived long, and my merciful judge has well disposed my life. The time of my departure is at hand, for my soul desires to see Christ my King in His beauty.' This, and many like things he said, and passed the day in gladness until evening. Then the same boy, named Wilbert, said once more: 'There is still one sentence, dear master, which is not written down.' And he said, 'Well, then, write it.' And after a little space the boy said: 'Now it is finished.' And he answered: 'Well, thou hast spoken truth; it is finished. Take my head in thy hands, for it much delights me to sit opposite my holy place where I used to pray, that so sitting I may call upon my Father.' And thus upon the floor of his cell singing 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost' he breathed his latest breath.

VIII. FROM THE 'NORTHUMBRIAN "GESTA"'.¹

These are preserved, partly in Old English in MSS. D and E of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, partly in Latin in 'Simeon of Durham.' The extracts given below are taken from the *Chronicle*, additional matter from 'Simeon' is placed within round brackets, as are 'Simeon's' dates, when they differ from those of the *Chronicle*.

737. King Ceolwulf took the tonsure (at Lindisfarne) and gave his kingdom to Eadberht his cousin. . . .

757 (758). Eadberht took the tonsure (voluntarily gave his kingdom to) Osulf his son, who reigned one year, and who was slain by his household on 9 Kal. August.

759. Æthelwald, called Moll, began to reign in Northumbria.

760 (764). Ceolwulf died (formerly king, but then a servant

of Christ and monk. It was to him that the truthful historian Bede sent the letter beginning 'I send to thee the *History of the English People*,' etc.) . . .¹

765. (Æthelwald lost the kingdom of Northumbria at Finchale,² 3 Kal. Nov.) And Alhred succeeded. . . .

774. The Northumbrians drove forth their king Alhred from York at Easter. (He fled, first to Bamborough, and then to the king of the Picts.) And they took Æthelred, son of Moll, for their lord. . . .

778 (779). Ælfwald drove out Æthelred. . . .

789 (788). Ælfwald, king of Northumbria, slain by Sigan (one of his thanes who had conspired against him). And Osred, son of Alhred, nephew of Ælfwald, succeeded.

790. Osred was betrayed, and driven from his kingdom. And Æthelred, son of Æthelwald, was restored. (And in the second year of Æthelred, the aldorman Eardulf was seized, and led to Ripon, and there commanded by Æthelred to be executed before the gate of the monastery. And the monks carried the body, with Gregorian chants, to the Minster, and pitched a tent over it, outside. And after midnight Eardulf was found alive inside the Minster. . . .)

(796). In this year king Æthelred was slain. . . . (And a nobleman Osbald was made king by certain of the chief men, but after twenty-seven days he was deserted by all the chiefs and by the royal household, expelled, and took refuge at Lindisfarne. . . . And Eardulf, concerning whom we have spoken above, was recalled from exile, and crowned in York.)

IX. S. BONIFACE REPROVES THE KING OF MERCIA.

From *Monumenta Moguntina*, ed. Jaffé, Berlin, 1866, No. 59.

To king Æthilbald, who wields the glorious sceptres of the realm of the English, a lord most dear to us, and in the love

¹ 'Simeon' adds, under the year 854: 'It was by means of this king becoming a monk that permission was given to the monks of Lindisfarne to drink wine or beer. Before that time they were wont to drink only milk or water, according to the ancient tradition of S. Aidan.'

² Finchale was a Northumbrian meeting-place, so this is presumably a decision of the 'witan.'

of Christ to be preferred beyond all other kings ; Archbishop Boniface, legate in Germany of the Roman Church, and Wera, and Burghard, and Werberht, and Abel, and Wilbalth, his fellow bishops, send loving greeting perpetual in Christ. We profess, before God and the holy angels, that, having heard of your prosperity, your faith in God, and your good works before God and man, we give thanks to God with great joy. . . . We have heard of your many deeds of almsgiving, and wish you joy thereof abundantly, . . . for such shall hear, in the Day of Judgment, those words of mercy from the Lord, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.' . . . And we have heard of you as a defender of widows and the poor, a represser of theft and injustice, perjury and pillage, a maker of peace in thy realm. In this also, praising God, have we rejoiced. . . . 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.' . . .

But it is told us by many, that thou hast not married a wife. . . . If from chastity and abstinence, in this also we rejoice ; reprehensible it is not, but highly laudable. But if (which God forbid) thou livest, as many say, neither in legitimate wedlock, nor yet in chastity and abstinence, but dost darken thy fair fame before God and man, with lust and adultery, greatly indeed are we saddened thereby. . . .

And yet (what is worse) those who tell us these things add that this ignominious crime is, above all, committed in convents with nuns, maidens devoted to the service of God. This is to add sin to sin. . . . Further we are told that thou hast broken many privileges of churches and minsters, and hast withdrawn from them their dues. . . . It is said moreover, that thy aldormen and thanes oppress monks and priests, more than Christian kings have ever done before. For since Pope Gregory sent from his apostolic seat missionaries of the Catholic faith, and converted the English to the true God, the privileges of the churches remained inviolate throughout England down to the time of Ceolred, king of Mercia, and Osred, king of Deira and Bernicia.

These two kings, stirred up by the Devil, set the example of these two crimes in the kingdom of England. . . . They persisted in the seduction of nuns, and the despoiling of monasteries, till they were condemned by the just judgment of God. They were hurled from their royal eminence, cut off by a premature and terrible death, banished from the light eternal, and plunged into the nethermost pit of hell. For Ceolred, the predecessor of Your Royal Highness (as those testified who were present) was suddenly driven mad, whilst he was banqueting with his great men, by the evil spirit who had seduced him to break the Law of God. Therefore, without penitence and confession, raving madly, gibbering with demons, and spurning the priests of God, he left this world and departed—there can be no doubt—to the torments of Hell. Osred¹ was led by the spirit of lust to defile hallowed maidens in nunneries, and to acts of fury, till he lost his glorious kingdom, and his young life, and that lustful soul of his, in a dishonourable and contemptible death.

Wherefore, beloved son, beware the pit, into which thou hast seen others fall before thy face. . . .

X. EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS OF ALCUIN.

From *Monumenta Alcuiniana*, ed. Jaffé, Berlin, 1873. Also in Dümmler, *Epistolae Karolini Aevi*, II, 1895 (*Mon. Germ. Hist.*).

Alcuin to Colcu [S. Colchu, prelector or chief of the school of Clonmacnoise, King's County, Ireland]. Early in 790.

. . . But I do not know what my future will be. For the Devil has of late caused something of a dissension between king Charles [Charles the Great] and king Offa, so that an embargo has been laid upon shipping on both sides. Some say that I should be sent into those parts, in the interests of peace. But I pray that, whether I stay or whether I go, I may be fortified by your holy prayers . . . (p. 166).

¹ Osred I, who was murdered in 716. (See above, p. 187.)

To his 'beloved brother, the priest Beornwine.' Early in 790 (Jaffé); 793-6 (Dümmler).

. . . I have always been loyal to king Offa and the English people. Just as I will keep faithfully, to the best of my power, the friends whom God has granted to me, so will I the friends, whom I have left in my native land . . . (p. 169).

To 'the noble youth Ecgfrith' [son of Offa]. 786-796.

. . . Behold from what noble parents thou art born, and with what heed brought up. Let not thy character degenerate from the nobility of thy birth. Study diligently their example: from thy father learn authority, from thy mother kindness: from him to rule thy people with justice, from her to have tender compassion upon the wretched: from both learn to be devoted to the Christian religion, to be instant in prayer, to be generous in giving of alms, and sober in the whole conduct of life . . . (p. 267).

To Offa, 'his humble friend Alcuin.' 796.

. . . I would have your grace know that my lord and king Charles has often had friendly speech with me concerning you. In him you have in all ways a most faithful friend. . . . He has sent worthy gifts to your grace, and also to your bishoprics. . . . Equally he has sent gifts to king Æthilred [of Northumbria] and his bishoprics. But, alas, as the gifts and the letters were in the hands of the messengers, came the sad news . . . of king Æthilred's murder and the treason of his people. So king Charles held back his gifts, and was so moved with wrath against the Northumbrians that he said, 'they are a perfidious and perverse nation, murderers of their lords.' He reckoned them worse than the heathen: and, if I had not interceded for them, would have done them any harm in his power.

I, indeed, was prepared to return, with the gifts I have received, to you, and to my country [Northumbria]. . . . But I know not what I should do among my own people; for among them no one is secure, nor is there any profit in wise counsel.

Lo! the most sacred places are laid waste by the heathen [the Danes]: altars defiled by perjury, monasteries polluted with uncleanness, the earth stained with the blood of its lords and rulers. . . . And if it be indeed true, that this iniquity proceeded from the chief leaders of the people, where then can we hope for security or faith? If this foul torrent of treachery flowed from that very place, which was wont to be the most pure fountain of faithfulness and truth . . . (p. 290).

To Osbald [the usurping, and expelled, king of Northumbria]. 796.

. . . It grieves me concerning thee, that thou didst not hearken unto me when two years ago I urged thee in my letters to abandon the world and serve God according to thy vow. . . . But return, return and fulfil thy vow . . . lest thou perish with the impious, if thou art innocent of the blood of thy lord. But if, indeed, thou hast consented to this crime, confess thy guilt, be reconciled to God, and flee the society of scoundrels. . . . Add not sin to sin by laying waste thy country, by spilling of blood. Think how much blood—of kings, nobles and people—has been shed by thee and by thy kin. Miserable generation, through whom such evils have come upon our country. . . .¹ (p. 306).

To Eardwulf [the new king of Northumbria]. 796.

Thou dost know, most excellent king, from what dangers the Divine Mercy freed thee, and how easily, in God's own good time, thou wert raised to the throne. Keep ever in thy memory God's so great gifts to thee, and be grateful for them. . . . For know of a certainty, that no one else can preserve thy life, save He who freed thee from imminent death.² . . . Consider most earnestly for what transgressions thy predecessors have lost life and kingdom. And beware that thou act not likewise, lest a like judgment fall upon

¹ Osbald took Alcuin's advice, and died an abbot.

² Eardwulf had been executed (somewhat superficially) before the gates of the Monastery of Ripon (see above, *Extract VIII*).

thee. The perjuries of others, God has condemned; the adulteries of others, He has punished; the avarice of others, and their deceptions, He has avenged. The unjust acts of others have not been pleasing to him. 'God is no respecter of persons;' but they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (p. 304).

To Osbert, a Mercian noble [on the death of Offa and Ecgrith]. 797.

. . . It has not been, I think, on account of his own sins that that illustrious and noble youth has died: but the blood which the father shed has been avenged upon the son. For it is known to you, how much blood his father (Offa) poured forth, that he might establish the kingdom for his son. Yet was this not the establishment of the kingdom, but its destruction; the wise has erred, even as the fool. . . .

But do you admonish the whole nation of Mercia to follow with diligence good and pure morals, as instituted by Offa of blessed memory. . . .¹ (pp. 350-351; Dümmler, pp. 179-180.)

XI. CORRESPONDENCE OF CHARLES THE GREAT AND OFFA.

(a) A peccant priest.

From *Monumenta Carolina*, ed. Jaffé, Berlin, p. 351.

Charles, by the grace of God king of the Franks and defender of the Holy Church of God, to his beloved brother and friend, king Offa, greeting.

This priest, of Irish origin, has dwelt among us some time, in the diocese of Hildebold, bishop of Cologne,² but he is reputed blameworthy, for he has been accused of eating flesh during Lent. Now our priests have refused to give judgment in the matter, for they did not find conclusive evidence. But neither have they permitted him longer to

¹ This seems to be an allusion to the lost Laws of Offa, to which Alfred also refers.

² 784-819.

remain in his accustomed place, by reason of his ill-fame, lest the honour of the priesthood should suffer among the ignorant people. . . . Wherefore we beg of you, as opportunity may occur, to give command that he should be transported to his own country: that he may be judged in that place, from whence he is come.¹ . . .

(b) Tariffs and Presents.

Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, iii, 496-8.

Charles, by the grace of God king of the Franks and the Lombards, and 'patricius Romanorum,' to his honoured and beloved brother, Offa, king of the Mercians. . . .

. . . As to pilgrims who, for the love of God, and the welfare of their soul, desire to approach the holy places of the blessed apostles, as we have granted already, let them proceed in peace without any molestation, carrying with them things necessary for their journey. But we have found certain persons fraudulently mingled among them for the sake of trading, following their own profit, not serving religion. If such are found among them, they must pay, at the proper places, the fixed tariffs—the others may go free, and in peace. . . .

We have taken care to send to your beloved Highness a belt, a Hunland sword, and two silken mantles. . . .

XII. LETTER FROM POPE LEO III TO COENWULF, KING OF MERCA, 798.

Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, iii., 524-5.

. . . King Offa, in a Synod where all the bishops and magnates and people of the isle of Britain were assembled. . . .

¹ This letter has been treated by Jaffé, Dümmler, and Haddan and Stubbs, as a request to Offa to insist upon the return home from Cologne of the carnivorous priest. Were this so, it would be an interesting proof that Offa was regarded as responsible for all natives of the British Isles, whilst resident on the Continent. But surely the priest is deported by the Frankish authorities to England, and all that is left to Offa is to forward him to Ireland.

vowed a vow to the blessed Peter, the apostle of the Lord and keeper of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that he would send to that apostle of God's Church every year as many manuces as there were days in the year, to wit 365, for the relief of the poor and the upkeep of the lamps ; which thing also he performed. . .

XIII. CANTERBURY VINDICATED.

From Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, iii., 542-4.

This act of a Council held under Coenwulf, on Oct. 12, 803, by abolishing the archiepiscopal rights of Lichfield marked the conclusion to the attempt which Offa had made to establish an archbishopric in Mercia.

. . . Enjoining this, and writing it with the sign of the Holy Cross, that the archiepiscopal seat shall never from this time onward be in Lichfield, nor in any other place save only in Canterbury, where is Christ's Church, and where first the Catholic faith shone forth again¹ in this island. . . . Further, with the consent and licence of our apostolic lord Pope Leo, we declare of no validity the bull of Pope Hadrian concerning the pallium and the archiepiscopal see at Lichfield, because it was gained surreptitiously and through false suggestion. . . . And we have resolved, that the seat of the archbishopric shall remain where the holy gospel of Christ was preached first in England by S. Augustine.

XIV. SOME TITLES OF THE KINGS OF MERCA.

From Birch, *Cart. Sax.*, No. 154.

Grant of land by Æthilbald to his thane Cyniberht, in order to build a monastery at Ismere (Worcestershire), in 736.

I, Æthilbalt, by the grace of God, king, not only of the

¹*penituit* is the reading of the manuscript (*Cotton, Aug. II, 6I*), Kemble, and following him, Haddan and Stubbs, give this reading, which I cannot translate, and assume that *renituit* is meant.

Mercians, but also of the regions which are called by the general name of the South Angli (*Sut Angli*). . . .

. . . Æthilbalt, king of Britain. . . .

From Birch, *Cart. Sax.*, No. 214.

Grant by king Offa, to the archbishop of Canterbury, of land at Lydd (Romney Marsh), in 774.

. . . I, Offa, king of the whole land of the English (*rex totius Anglorum patriæ*). . . .

CHAPTER VI.

THE NINTH CENTURY (793-900).

THE DANES, AND THE RESISTANCE OF WESSEX.

- I. The Sack of Lindisfarne, from the Northumbrian *Gesta*.
- II. Alcuin condoles over the harrying of Lindisfarne.
- III. Charles the Great and the Pope intervene in Northumbria.
- IV. West-Saxon Annals, 789-900.
- ✓ V. The Peace of Alfred and Guthrum.
- ✓ VI. From Asser's *Life of Alfred*.
- ✓ VII. From the *Laws of Alfred*.
- ✓ VIII. Alfred's letter on the state of learning in England.
- ✓ IX. Voyages of Alfred's captains.
- ✓ X. From Alfred's Will.
- ✓ XI. Alfred as arbitrator.
- XII. Grant to S. Augustine's, Canterbury.

OUR great authority for this period is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as drawn up under king Alfred, round about 890. An analysis of this *Chronicle* has been made to show how it depends upon earlier chronicles, now lost. We have seen above (p. 69) that one of these assumed sources was a set of Annals ending about 754, and therefore already very ancient in Alfred's time. Other stages can be conjectured. 'It is highly probable,' says Professor Stenton, 'that soon after king Alfred's accession in 871, the archetype of the Chronicle which we possess was brought down to the death of king Æthelwulf in 858'¹ and 'that after a brief interval another hand began the series of entries which end with the annal

¹This is the annal given under the year 855 below. It covers that year, and the three years following.

for 891.’¹ This recension Professor Stenton believes to have been made, not at Winchester, but further towards the South-West. What is essential to remember is that, when, after 891, these *Chronicles* came to be circulated throughout the kingdom, ‘different copies developed an independent life which increases the evidence for the history of the period, but also greatly complicates its criticism.’ And this independent life affects the period anterior to 891, as well as that subsequent to it. We saw in the last chapter how certain copies of the *Chronicle*, made in the North, incorporated portions of the earlier *Northumbrian ‘Gesta’* (731-806).

Owing to the cessation of these ‘*Gesta*,’ our information for the North becomes scanty in this century. So great is the obscurity here that we are left to learn from foreign sources of an intervention by Charles the Great in Northumbrian affairs: native sources tell us nothing (*Extract III*). For the South, however, our information is much better, and, especially for the periods just before and after 891, ‘the *Chronicle* is as nearly contemporary with the events which it records as any written history is likely to be.’²

Of the Latin *Life of Alfred* by his Bishop Asser, it has been said that ‘probably no work of similar extent has contributed so much to English history.’ It was transcribed wholesale into later Latin *Chronicles*, such as those of Florence of Worcester (who died in 1118), the so-called ‘Simeon of Durham,’ and the so-called *Annals of St. Neots*. When, in Elizabeth’s reign, Archbishop Parker edited Asser, he could find but one manuscript (since burnt). Parker noticed the close agreement between this unique manuscript and the *Annals of St. Neots*, and concluded that these *Annals* were also the work of Asser. In his edition of Asser, Parker accordingly interpolated passages which did not occur in the unique manuscript, but did occur in the *Annals of St. Neots*. Parker did this in all good faith, believing that the *Annals*

¹ In *Essays in Mediæval History presented to T. F. Tout*, Manchester, 1925.

² Plummer, *Life of Alfred*, p. 12.

preserved a text of the *Life* fuller than that in the unique manuscript. It is thus that the tale of the burning of the cakes, and of Alfred's tyranny in his youth, came into the history books.

The *Annals of St. Neots* belong, apparently, to the early Twelfth Century. So these traditions, although not recorded till more than two centuries after Alfred's death, acquired the authority of the contemporary bishop Asser. Parker's edition was followed by Camden's, which contained a further spurious addition, concerning king Alfred's intervention in the feuds of the University of Oxford (where the dons were alleged to have been disturbed by the innovations of the reforming Grimbold). These interpolations, and especially the forgery which claimed for Oxford an antiquity going back, not merely to the Ninth, but even to the Fifth Century A.D., brought Asser's *Life* into disrepute, and it has often been condemned as a forgery. Mr. W. H. Stevenson, in his edition of Asser (Oxford, 1904: a model of what an edition should be) finds that 'the serious charges brought against its authenticity break down altogether under examination, while there remain several features that point with varying strength to the conclusion that it is, despite its difficulties and corruptions, really a work of the time it purports to be. The result is confirmed by the important corroboration of some of its statements by contemporary Frankish chroniclers.'

② Our third source of information consists in the writings of king Alfred himself.

I. THE SACK OF LINDISFARNE.

From the *Northumbrian 'Gesta.'*

(From the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, MSS. D and E; also preserved in 'Simeon of Durham;' see above, p. 190.)

793. Dread prodigies appeared over Northumbria, and miserably terrified the people: that is, whirlwinds beyond measure, and lightnings; and fiery dragons were seen flying

in the sky. Upon these tokens soon followed a great famine, and a little after that, in the same year, on the 6th of the Ides of January (*read 'June,' Simeon of Durham*), the harrying of the heathen men miserably destroyed God's church at Lindisfarne, through robbery and slaughter. . . .

794. The heathen harried in Northumbria, and robbed Ecgferth's minster at Jarrow. (But S. Cuthbert did not permit them to depart unpunished—*Simeon of Durham*.) There one of their leaders was slain; and also some of their ships were destroyed by bad weather, and many of them were there drowned; and some came ashore alive, and at the river's mouth they were quickly slain (*absque misericordia—S. of D.*).

II. ALCUIN CONDOLES OVER THE HARRYING OF LINDISFARNE.

From *Monumenta Alcuiniana*, ed. Jaffé, Berlin, 1873.

[To bishop Higbald and all the community of Lindisfarne, 793.]

. . . What can we say, save lament in spirit with you before the altar of Christ, and repeat 'Spare, Lord, spare thy people, and give not thine inheritance to the Gentiles, lest the heathen say, 'where is the God of the Christians?' What confidence can the churches of Britain have, if Saint Cuthbert, with so great a company of the Saints, defends not his own. Either this is the beginning of greater sorrow, or the sins of the inhabitants have called it down. . . .

When our lord king Charles returns home, having, by the mercy of God, subdued his foes, we propose, God aiding us, to go to him. If then we can do anything, either regarding the boys who have been led into captivity by the heathen, or regarding any other of your necessities, we will attend to it diligently (pp. 190-3).

To Æthelred, king of Northumbria, 793.

Lo, it is almost three hundred and fifty years that we and our forefathers have dwelt in this fair land, and never has

such a horror before appeared in Britain, such as we have just suffered from the heathen. It was not thought possible that they could have made such a voyage. Behold the church of S. Cuthbert sprinkled with the blood of the priests of Christ, robbed of all its ornaments. . . . In that place where, after the departure of Paulinus from York, the Christian faith had its beginning among us, there is the beginning of woe and calamity. . . . Portents of this woe came before it. . . . What signifies that rain of blood during Lent in the town of York? . . . (pp. 181-2).

To the monks of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow.

. . . [Let this be a lesson] to the novices to praise diligently the King of Heaven, not to be digging out foxes, or chasing hares. How impious is it to follow foxes instead of Christ! Let them learn the sacred scriptures. Take to heart the example of the youthful diligence of Bede . . . (pp. 199-200).

III. CHARLES THE GREAT AND THE POPE INTERVENE IN NORTHUMBRIA.

From 'Einhardi *Annales*,' in Pertz, *Monumenta, Scriptorum* I., p. 195.

808. Meanwhile the king of the Northumbrians in Britain, Eardulf by name, driven from his kingdom and country, came to the Emperor while he was still at Nimeguen, and, after explaining the reason of his coming, proceeded to Rome; and, returning from Rome, was restored to his kingdom by legates of the Pope, and of our Lord the Emperor. At that time Leo III presided over the Roman Church; his legate, sent to Britain, was Adulf, a deacon from Britain; with him were sent, on behalf of the Emperor, two abbots, Hrotfrid and Nanthari. . . .

IV. WEST SAXON ANNALS, 789-900.

The *Parker MS.* (A) of the *Chronicle* is followed here, since it was written very little later than the date of the circulation of the *Chronicle*, shortly after 890, and was kept up to date by entries

which for thirty years continued to be made not very long after the events they describe. The other extant manuscripts of the *Chronicle* were transcribed much later: but as they were not copied from the *Parker MS.*, they sometimes preserve the correct reading where the *Parker MS.*, although so much earlier, goes wrong.

[789] King Beorhtric [of Wessex] took to wife Eadburg, daughter of Offa: and in his days¹ came first three ships²: and the reeve rode thereto, and wished to drive them to the king's town,³ because he knew not what they were; and they slew him; and those were the first ships of Danish men that sought the land of England. . . .

[802] King Beorhtric died . . . and Egbert [*Ecgbryht*] succeeded to Wessex. . . .

[814] Carl [Charles the Great] died, and he reigned forty-five winters. . . .

[815] Egbert harried West Wales [Cornwall] from East to West. . . .

[825] The fight of the men of Cornwall and Devon at *Gafulford*: and the same year king Egbert fought with king Beornwulf [of Mercia] at *Ellendun*,⁴ and had the victory, and there was a great slaughter. Then he sent Æthelwulf his son, and Ealhstan his bishop, and Wulfheard his aldorman from his army to Kent, with a great host: and they drove king Baldred north over the Thames: and the men of Kent turned to them, and of Surrey, and Sussex and Essex, because they had of old been wrongly forced away from his kin. And that same year the king of the East Angles, and his people, sought the peace and protection of king Egbert,

¹ Not necessarily, then, in 789: but between 786 and 793 or even 802.

² MSS. D and E add after *ships*, 'of Northmen from *Hæretha land*' i.e. from near the Hardanger fjord.

³ Æthelwerd adds that the reeve was named Beaduheard, and stationed at Dorchester.

⁴ Near Swindon, in the parish of Wroughton, Wilts. See G. B. Grundy, *The Saxon Battlefields of Wilts*, in the *Archæological Journal*, vol. 75, pp. 181-7 (1918).

for fear of the Mercians. And that year the East Angles slew Beornwulf, king of the Mercians. . . .

[828] Ludeca, king of the Mercians, was slain, and his five aldormen with him. . . .

[829] . . . Egbert subdued Mercia, and all south of the Humber, and he was the eighth king who was Bretwalda; the first who had thus great a kingdom was Ælle, king of Sussex: the second Ceawlin of Wessex: the third Æthelbert, of Kent: the fourth Rædwald of East Anglia: the fifth Edwin of Northumbria: the sixth Oswald, who ruled after him: the seventh Oswio, Oswald's brother: the eighth was Egbert, king of Wessex; and this Egbert led his army to Dore [in Derbyshire] against the Northumbrians: and they there offered him peace and submission; and on that they parted.

[830] Egbert led an army into North Wales [i.e. Wales] and reduced them to humble submission. . . .

[834] The heathen men harried Sheppey. . . .

[836] Egbert fought against the crews of thirty-five ships at Carhampton [in Somersetshire], and there was great slaughter, and the Danes held the field. . . .

[838] A great Danish fleet came to West Wales [Cornwall], and they made an agreement to fight against Egbert, king of Wessex: and when he heard that, he marched against them, and fought at Hengestdun [Hingston Down, Cornwall], and put both the Welsh and the Danes to flight.

[839] King Egbert died; and before he became king, Offa of Mercia and Beorhtric of Wessex had exiled him from England to France for three [*read* 'thirteen'] years: and Beorhtric helped Offa because he had wedded his daughter. And this Egbert reigned thirty-seven winters and seven months. And Æthelwulf his son succeeded to Wessex: and he¹ gave to his¹ son Æthelstan, Kent, Essex, Surrey, and Sussex.

[840] Aldorman Wulfheard fought at Southampton against the crews of thirty-three ships, and slew a great slaughter, and had the victory; and that year he died. And the same

¹ Æthelstan is apparently Egbert's son.

year the aldorman Æthelhelm fought at the head of the men of Dorset against the Danes at Portland, and for a good time had the upper hand, but the Danes slew him, and held the battlefield.

[841] Aldorman Herebryht was slain by the heathen, and many men with him, in Romney Marsh. And that same year also in Lincolnshire and East Anglia and Kent were many men slain by the Danes.

[842] There was great slaughter at London, and at Étaples,¹ and at Rochester. . . .

851. Aldorman Ceorl fought at the head of the men of Devon against the heathen at *Wicganbeorg*, and there slew a great slaughter, and had the victory. And the same year, king Æthelstan and aldorman Ealchere smote a great Danish army at Sandwich in Kent, and took nine ships and put the others to flight. And the heathen men for the first time remained over the winter.² And the same year there came 350 ships to the mouth of the Thames, and stormed Canterbury, and London, and put to flight Beorhtwulf, king of Mercia, and his army, and then went south across the Thames to Surrey. And king Æthelwulf and his son Æthelbald fought with them at the head of the West Saxon army at Oakley, and there they slew the greatest slaughter that we have heard tell of upon a heathen army up to this present day, and had the victory.

853. Burgred, king of Mercia, and his 'witan' asked Æthelwulf to help him to reduce Wales; and he did so, and crossed over Mercia to Wales with his army, and they made them all obedient to him. And the same year king Æthelwulf sent his son Alfred to Rome. At that time Leo was pope, and he hallowed Alfred as king, and made him his spiritual son.³

¹ *Cwantarvic*: 'the town on the Canche.'

² The year begins on Sept. 24, so that this 'wintering' precedes the Danish defeat at Oakley. See Introduction, p. xxiv.

³ The letter of Leo IV to 'Edelwulf, king of the English' is extant: 'Your son Alfred [*Erfred*] whom you have sent to the Apostolic See, we have received in kindly wise, and have arrayed him honourably in the

Then in the same year Ealhere with the men of Kent, and Huda with the men of Surrey, fought in Thanet against the heathen, and at first had the victory: and there was many a man slain and drowned on either side. And after Easter, king Æthelwulf gave his daughter to king Burgred of Mercia.

855. In this year the heathen first stayed over the winter in Sheppey. And the same year king Æthelwulf granted the tenth part of his land, throughout all his kingdom, for the glory of God, and his eternal salvation. And the same year he went with great splendour to Rome, and dwelt there twelve months. And, as he came home, Charles, king of the Franks, gave him his daughter as queen. And after that, he came to his people, and they were glad thereof. And two years after he came from Frankland he died, and his body lies at Winchester, and he reigned eighteen years and a half. . . .

[Here follows the genealogy of Æthelwulf to Adam, which is thought to have terminated one stage of the *Chronicle*: then follow entries narrating the attacks of the Danes, and the overthrow by them of Northumbria in 867, and of East Anglia in 870.]

871. The Danes came to Reading in Wessex, and three nights after rode up two more [Danish] earls. Then aldorman Æthelwulf met them at Englefield, fought them, and had the victory. Four nights after, king Æthelred and Alfred his brother led a great army to Reading and fought against the Danes. There was great slaughter on both sides, and aldorman Æthelwulf was slain, and the Danes held the field. Four nights after, king Æthelred and Alfred his brother fought with the whole body of the Danes at Ashdown. And they were in two hosts: in one were the heathen kings, Bagsecg and Halfdene, and in the other were the earls. And king Æthelred fought against the host of the kings: and there was slain the king Bagsecg. And Alfred his brother fought against the host of the earls, and there was slain earl Sidroc the old, and earl

girdle and vestments of the consulship (as is the custom with Roman consuls) as our spiritual son.' See *Mon. Germ. Hist., Epistolæ Karolini Ævi*, III, 602 (1899).

Sidroc the young, and earl Osbeorn, and earl Fræna, and earl Harold. And both the hosts were routed; and there were many thousands slain, and they were fighting till night. And a fortnight after, king Æthelred and Alfred his brother fought against the Danes at Basing [Hants], and there the Danes had the victory. And two months after, king Æthelred and Alfred his brother fought against the Danes at *Meretun*; and they were in two hosts; and till far on in the day they drove back both hosts victoriously; but there was great slaughter on both sides, and the Danes held the field; and there was bishop Heahmund slain, and many good men. After this fight came a great summer-army.¹ And after Easter king Æthelred died. He had reigned five years, and his body lies at Wimborne.

Then Alfred, son of Æthelwulf, his brother, succeeded: and after a month king Alfred, with but a little company, fought against the whole body of the Danes at Wilton. And till far on in the day he drove them back, but the Danes held the field. And in this year there were fought nine pitched battles against the Danes, in the kingdom to the south of the Thames, apart from those raids which were not counted, raids upon which Alfred the king's brother rode, and this or that aldorman or king's thane. And in the year there were slain nine earls and one king. And the West Saxons made peace with the Danes.

[The annals 872-5 tell of the overthrow of Mercia, where the Danes drove out the king, and set up a puppet, 'an unwise king's thane,' named Ceolwulf. They also tell of a naval victory by Alfred.]

876. The Danes evaded the army of Wessex, and got into Wareham. And Alfred made peace with the Danes. And they swore him oaths upon the holy ring, an oath which before they would swear to no nation, that they would leave his kingdom at once. Yet at that very time the mounted Danes evaded the army of Wessex by night, and got into Exeter. And this year Healfdene portioned out Northumbria:

¹ Danes who do not winter in the country.

846. and the Danes began ploughing and working the land for themselves.

877. The Danes came into Exeter from Wareham, and the Danish ships sailed west about. And then a great tempest met them on the sea, and 120 ships foundered off Swanage. And king Alfred rode after the mounted Danes with his army to Exeter; but he could not cut them off till they were in the stronghold where they could not be reached. And they gave him hostages as security, as many as he asked, swore great oaths, and kept the peace. And in the autumn the Danes went to Mercia: part of it they portioned out, part they gave to Ceolwulf.

878. The Danes stole secretly in midwinter, after Twelfth Night, to Chippenham, and raided Wessex. They occupied much of it, driving the inhabitants oversea. And most of the rest they raided, and reduced to submission, except king Alfred; and he, with difficulty, went with a small company in the woods and strongholds amid the moors.

And the same winter, the brother of Inwære and Healfdene was in Wessex, in Devonshire, with twenty-three ships; and there he was slain, and 840 of his men with him.

And after that, at Easter, king Alfred, with a small company, made a fort at Athelney, and from it he was fighting against the Danes, at the head of those Somersetshire men who dwelt nearest. Then, in the seventh week after Easter he rode to Ecgbyrht's Stone, to the east of Selwood. And there came to meet him all the men of Somersetshire, and of Wiltshire, and those of Hampshire on this side the sea,¹ and were glad of him. Then, one night after, he went from his camp to Iley [near Warminster], and after another to Edington. And there he fought with the whole force of the Danes, and put them to flight, and rode after them to their fortifica-

¹ The Southampton Water. The context would lead us to suppose that West Hampshire is meant, and this agrees well with Prof. Stenton's argument that this part of the *Chronicle* was compiled in the South-West. Reckoning from Sherborne, West Hampshire is 'on this side' of the Southampton Water, but not if we reckon from Winchester.

tions, and besieged them a fortnight. Then the Danes gave him hostages as security, and swore great oaths that they would leave his kingdom; and they promised him that their king should receive baptism. And they carried out their promises: three weeks after, their king Godrum and their chief men—thirty all told—came to Aller, which is by Athelney. And the king received him at baptism, and his 'chrismloosing' was at Wedmore; and he was twelve nights with the king; and the king gave much wealth to him and his companions. . . .

[Of the annals from 879-890 the most interesting is that for 886, which records how Alfred occupied London, and how 'all the English turned to him, save those in captivity to the Danes.']

891. . . . Three 'Scots' came to king Alfred, in a boat without any steering gear, from Ireland. They had stolen away from Ireland, because they wished for the love of God to dwell in some foreign land, they did not care where. The boat they came in was made of two hides and a half, and they had taken provisions for seven nights: and after seven nights they came to land in Cornwall. And forthwith they came to king Alfred. And thus were they named—Dubslane and Macbethu and Mælinmun.

And Swifneh, the best teacher among the 'Scots,' died.

892.¹ . . . In this year the great Danish host, about which we spoke before, left the kingdom of the East Franks, and came to Boulogne. And there they got ships, so that they crossed over in one journey, horses and all, and came to the mouth of the Lymne with 250 ships. That mouth is in the east part of Kent, at the east end of the great wood which we call Andred. That wood is 120 miles long, or longer, from east to west, and 30 miles broad. Out of the wood flows the river that we spoke of. They drew their ships up the river as far as the wood, four miles from the outer part

¹ In the *Parker MS.* all the years from 892 to 929 have been altered by the addition of a year. The original years are here restored. See Armitage Robinson, *Times of S. Dunstan*, 1923, 17-20.

of the mouth. And there they stormed a fort. Inside the fort were a few yeomen, and it was only half finished.

Then soon after this, came Hæsten with 80 ships up the Thames mouth; and he made a fort at Milton [near Sittingbourne.] And the other Danish army was at Appledore.

893. This year, that was twelve months after they had made the fort in Kent, though the Northumbrians and East Angles had given oath to king Alfred, and the East Angles six hostages, yet, in spite of this pledge, as often as the other Danish bands went out in full force, they did the same, either with them, or on their side. Then king Alfred gathered his army, and marched till he encamped between the two Danish hosts, as near as he could by reason of strongholds in forest and water,¹ so that he could reach either of them, if they wished to offer battle. Then the Danes went through the wood in companies and gangs, whichever side happened to be defenceless. And almost every day other companies, either from the English army, or from the towns, were searching for the Danes, either by day or by night. King Alfred had divided his army into two, to be from time to time one half at home and the other serving, except the men whose duty it was to hold the towns. Only twice did the Danes come all together out of their camp; once when they first landed, before the English army was mustered, and once when they wished to leave their camp for good. They had taken much plunder, and wished to carry it north, across the Thames, into Essex, to their ships. Then the English army rode before them, and fought with the Danes at Farnham, routed them, and rescued their plunder. And the Danes fled over the Thames, without any ford, and up by the Colne in to an island; there the English army besieged them as long as their rations lasted. But they had served their time, and consumed their meat, whilst the king was on his way to relieve them, with the division which served with him.

¹ Or, as Mr. Bruce Dickins suggests, 'at a convenient distance from the stronghold in the forest (Appledore) and the stronghold on the water (Milton).'

Before the king arrived, the other division was on the way home. But the Danes remained behind, because their king had been wounded in the fight, so that they could not carry him.

Then the Danes dwelling in Northumbria and East Anglia gathered some hundred ships, and went south about, and some forty ships north about, and besieged a fort on the north coast of Devonshire; and those who went south about besieged Exeter. When the king heard that, he went west to Exeter with all his army, except a very small part of the people dwelling in the east. . . .

[The annal further tells how the Danes made a dash up the Thames, and then up the Severn, till after much fighting, marching and countermarching, they came to Wirral, and fortified themselves in a deserted Roman town, 'a waste chester,' called *Legaceaster* (i.e. *Legionum Castra*, Chester).]

894. . . . The Danes left Wirral, and went into Wales, because they could stay in Wirral no longer; they had lost both the cattle and the corn which they had plundered. When they left Wales with the booty they had taken there, they went by way of Northumbria and East Anglia, so that the English army could not reach them, till they came to the eastern part of Essex, to an island, out in the sea, called Mersea. And when the Danes who had been besieging Exeter returned home, they harried Sussex near Chichester. And the men of the town put them to flight, slew many hundreds of them, and took some of their ships. Then in the same year, before winter, the Danes in Mersea drew their ships up the Thames, and then up the Lea. That was two years after they had come hither over the sea.

895. In the same year the aforesaid body of Danes made a fortress by the Lea, twenty miles above London. Then in the summer, a large portion of the men of London and also of other folk marched to the Danish fortress. And there they were routed, and some four of the king's thanes slain. Then, in the harvest-time, the king camped in the neighbourhood of London, whilst they were reaping their corn, so that the

Danes could not deprive them of the harvest. Then one day the king rode up by the river, and observed where the river could be blocked, so that they could not bring out their ships. And so it was done: two forts were built, one on each side of the river. And when they had just begun the forts, and had encamped for that purpose, the Danes perceived that they could not bring out their ships. Then they left them, and went overland till they arrived at Bridgenorth by the Severn, and there built a fort. Then the English army rode west after the Danes, and the men of London fetched the ships; and all which they could not bring away they broke up, and those which were sound they brought into London. And the Danes had placed their women in safety in East Anglia before they left their fortress. Then they stayed the winter at Bridgenorth. That was three years after they came hither oversea to the mouth of the Lymne.

896. Then in the summer after, in this year, the Danes scattered, some to East Anglia, some to Northumbria. And those who had no property got themselves ships, and went south over the sea to the Seine.

The Danes, by God's mercy, had not utterly afflicted England: but they were much more afflicted in these three years by the pestilence of cattle and of men; and most of all in that many of the best of the king's thanes in the land died in these three years. Of these were, Swithulf, bishop of Rochester, and Ceolmund, aldorman in Kent; and Beorhtulf, aldorman in Essex, and Wulfred, aldorman in Hampshire, and Ealhheard, bishop at Dorchester, and Eadulf, the king's thane in Sussex, and Beornulf, the town-reeve in Winchester, and Ecgulf, the king's horse-thane, and many in addition to them, though I have named the most illustrious.

In the same year the Danes from East Anglia and Northumbria vexed the south coast of Wessex greatly with raids, most of all with the warships which they had built many years before. Then king Alfred bade build 'long ships' against the Danish warships: they were nearly twice as long as the others: some had sixty oars, some more: they were both

swifter and steadier and higher than the others. They were built neither on the Frisian pattern nor on the Danish, but as it seemed to the king that they might be most serviceable.

Then, at a certain time in the same year, there came six ships to the Isle of Wight, and did much harm, both in Devonshire and almost everywhere on the coast. Then the king ordered nine of the new ships to go against them, and they blocked their way into the open sea at the mouth of a river. Then three of the Danish ships went against them: (but three were on land higher up the river-mouth, and their crews had landed). Then the English ships took two of the three at the outer part of the estuary and slew the men on them; the third boat escaped; in it also were all the men slain save five. These five escaped because the English ships had run aground. They had also run aground very awkwardly: for three had grounded on the same side of the deep water as the Danish ships, and the other six on the other side, so that they could not reach each other. But when the water had ebbed many furlongs from the ships, the Danes from the three ships went to the three English ships which were aground by them, and there they fought. There were slain Lucumon, the king's reeve, and Wulfheard the Frisian, and Æbbe the Frisian, and Æthelhere the Frisian, and Æthelferth of the king's household, and altogether 62 Frisians and English, and 120 Danes. Yet the tide came to the Danish ships first, before the Christians could shove off theirs; and so they rowed away. But they were so sorely wounded that they could not row past Sussex, but the sea drove two of the ships ashore. And the crews were led to Winchester to the king: and he ordered them to be hanged there. The men in the one ship came to East Anglia, sorely wounded.

That same summer no less than twenty ships, crews and all, were lost on the south coast. . . .

900. Alfred, son of Æthelwulf, died, six nights before All Hallows. He was king over all England, save the part which was under Danish rule. He held the kingdom thirty winters, less one and a half. And Edward, his son, succeeded him.

V. THE PEACE OF ALFRED AND GUTHRUM.

Liebermann, I, 126, etc. : Attenborough, 98, etc. [English].

This is the peace which king Alfred and king Guthrum, and all the 'witan' of England, and all the people in East Anglia, have all agreed and confirmed with oaths for themselves and their followers, whether living or unborn, who care for God's favour or ours.

First concerning our boundaries : up the Thames, then up the Lea and along the Lea to its source, then straight to Bedford, then up the Ouse to Watling Street. Secondly, if a man be slain, we reckon all at equal price, English or Danish, at eight half-marks of pure gold ; except a churl who occupies rented land, or a freedman among the Danes. These are of equal price, 200 shillings each.

If a king's thane be accused of manslaughter, if he dare clear himself, he shall do so with the oaths of twelve king's thanes. A man of less degree shall clear himself with the oaths of eleven of his equals and of one king's thane. . . . Also we undertook, on the day that the oaths were sworn, that neither bond nor free might pass over to the Danish host without leave, any more than any of them to us. . . .

VI. FROM ASSER'S 'LIFE OF ALFRED.'

99. By a counsel inspired from on high, the king commanded his officers to divide in equal halves the revenues of each year. When this division had been made, he allotted the first part to worldly uses. This first part he subdivided into three portions. One of these was allotted to his warriors and thanes, who dwelt by turns in the royal court, serving various offices. For the king's household was always arranged in three shifts . . . so that the first company were on duty, day and night, for one month at court. At the end of the month the second company arrived, and the first went home, where its members remained for two months, attending to their own affairs. . . . To these warriors and thanes, then, was paid the first of the three above-mentioned portions—to

each according to his dignity and office. The second portion was paid to the workmen, of whom the king had an almost innumerable company, drawn from many nations, and skilled in every kind of construction. The third portion he expended upon strangers who came to him from every nation, far and near. He gave cheerfully to each one, according to his rank, whether they asked of him or no, with wonderful generosity, as it is written, 'The Lord loveth a cheerful giver.'

But the other part of his revenues . . . as we have just said, he devoted to God. He commanded his officers to divide it with the utmost care into four equal parts, in such wise that the first portion should be paid out, with discretion, to the poor of every nation who came to him. Regarding this he used to say that, so far as any human wisdom could ensure, the discreet principle should be followed which S. Gregory the Pope laid down concerning alms-giving: Do not give little to him to whom you should give much, nor yet much to him to whom you should give little: do not give nothing to him to whom you should give something, nor yet something to him to whom you should give nothing. The second portion, to the two minsters which he had caused to be built [Athelney and Shaftesbury] and to those serving God in them, concerning which we have spoken above. The third to the school, which he had most carefully formed from many of the young nobles of his own nation, and also from boys of humble birth. The fourth to the neighbouring monasteries in all Wessex and Mercia, and also in some years, in turn, to the churches and servants of God in Wales, Cornwall, Gaul, Armorica, Northumbria, and sometimes also Ireland. . . .

In so far as his sickness and his means would allow, he promised to render with all his might to God the half part of his services, whether of mind or body, by day or by night. But whereas by night the darkness prevented him from distinguishing the space of the hours, and often thick clouds and rain during the day, he began to plan how, relying on the mercy of God, he could keep this vow, without variation, till his death.

He pondered on this, and found at length a wise and useful plan. He bade his chaplains bring wax and weigh it : when enough had been collected, to equal the weight of seventy-two pennies, he commanded his chaplain to make six candles, each of equal weight, in such manner that each candle measured twelve inches, each inch marked off. By this plan, those six candles were burning by day and by night, for twenty-four hours without fail, before the holy relics of the many saints of God, which accompanied him everywhere. But sometimes these candles could not continue burning for a whole day and night, down to the hour at which they had been lighted the evening before, by reason of the great violence of the winds, which blew through the doors and windows of churches, through the many cracks in the walls, and the thin material of tents . . . ; so that the candles were forced to burn out before the proper time. The king therefore planned how he could shut out such puffs of wind ; and by a skilful and wise invention, he ordered a lantern to be made out of wood and ox-horn. For white ox-horns, if shaved thin, are not less transparent than a vessel of glass. So when this lantern had been cunningly made of wood and horn, as we have said, a candle was placed in it at night which shone as brightly without as within, and was not disturbed by any draughts ; for he had commanded a door of horn to be made for the opening of the lantern. By this device six candles, one after the other, shone without intermission for twenty-four hours neither less nor more. When they were finished, others were lighted. . . .

In his judgment also, he studied the interests both of nobles and commons, who often quarrelled bitterly among themselves at the meetings of the aldormen and sheriffs, so that hardly anybody would accept a ruling of the aldormen and sheriffs. Compelled by this constant discussion, all gave security to accept the arbitration of the king, and both sides hastened to carry out what they had undertaken. But he who was conscious of injustice on his side would not voluntarily come to the judgment of such a judge, albeit by force of law

and agreement he was compelled to come, however unwilling. For he knew that there nothing of his evil practice would lie hidden; nor is this strange, for the king was as wise in following up judicial matters, as in all other things. For he investigated almost all the judgments made in his kingdom in his absence, whether they were just or unjust. If he could perceive any iniquity in them, he would ask those judges, either personally or through some one he trusted, why they had given such unjust judgment, whether through ignorance or malice. . . . If the judges professed that they had given their judgments because they knew no better, he would discreetly and moderately reprove their inexperience and folly, thus, 'I wonder at this arrogance of yours, in that, by God's favour and mine, you have taken upon you this rank and office of wise men, but have neglected the study and pursuit of wisdom. Therefore I command that you either forthwith resign those offices of worldly power which you hold, or devote yourself much more closely to the study of wisdom.' When they heard these words, the aldormen and sheriffs, terrified and severely corrected, would strive with all their might to turn to the study of justice, so that in a wonderful wise the aldormen, though almost all had been unlearned from childhood, his sheriffs and thanes, gave themselves to the study of letters, preferring the laborious learning of an unaccustomed discipline to the loss of their posts. But if anyone, either from age, or that slowness of mind which comes from want of practice, could not make progress in literary studies, he would, whenever he had free time, order some one to read Saxon books to him, by day or by night; his son, if he had one, or one of his kinsmen, or if he had no one else, some man of his, freedman or slave, whom long before he had advanced to the office of reading. And sighing from their inmost souls they would lament, that in their youth they had not devoted themselves to such studies. They counted happy the youth of to-day, who could be well instructed in the liberal arts, reckoning themselves unlucky, in that they had not acquired learning in their youth, and now in their old age could not acquire it, albeit they desired it eagerly.

VII. FROM THE LAWS OF ALFRED.

Liebermann, I, 16, etc. : Attenborough, 62, etc.

Now I, king Alfred, have gathered together these laws, and have commanded many of those which our ancestors held to be written down, those that seemed good to me. And many, which seemed not good to me, did I reject, with the advice of my 'witan,' or bade to be held in other wise. For I did not dare to presume to set in writing much of my own : for it was unknown to me, how much of it would seem good to those who will come after us. But what laws I found, either from the days of Ine, my kinsman, or of Offa, king of the Mercians, or of Æthelberht, who first in England received baptism, those that seemed to me most just, I gathered them herein, and the rest I rejected.

I then, Alfred, king of the West Saxons, showed them to all my 'witan,' and they said that it seemed good to them all for these laws to be held.

1. Firstly, then, we enjoin, what is of all most needful, that every man abide carefully by his oath and his pledge. If indeed anyone be wrongfully constrained to either of these two things, to promise to betray his lord, or to support an unjust act, such a promise it is better to belie than to perform. But a man who has promised anything that is lawful, and belies that, shall humbly give his weapons and his property to his friends to hold, and shall remain forty nights in prison, at one of the royal seats, and shall there suffer what the bishop shall ordain. And his kinsmen shall feed him, if he himself have no meat ; if he have no kin and no meat, the king's reeve shall feed him. If he has to be constrained and bound, he shall forfeit his weapons and his property ; if he is slain, no wergeld shall be paid for him. If he run away before his time, and is retaken, let him be forty nights in prison, as he ought to have been ; but if he escape, let him be exiled and accursed from all the churches of Christ ; but, if there be secular surety for him, let him pay the due compensation for breaking bail ; and for breach of faith, what his confessor may prescribe.

4. If anyone plot against the king's life, either personally, or through harbouring outlaws, or men of the king, he shall forfeit his life, and all that he possesses. If he will clear himself, he must do it in accordance with the king's wergeld.¹

9. . . . Of old, the fines to be paid for theft of gold, or horses, or bees, and many other fines were greater than the rest. Now they are all alike (except the fine for stealing men) 120 shillings.

31. If a man be slain who has no relatives, half his wergeld shall go to the king, half to his guild-brethren.

32. If a man utter a public slander, and it be brought home to him, with no lighter thing shall he make compensation than that his tongue be cut out: and his tongue shall not be redeemed at a cheaper price than at its value in accordance with the man's wergeld.²

35. If anyone bind a churl who is innocent, he shall make compensation with 10 shillings: if he flog him, he shall pay 20 shillings: if he place him in the stocks, 30 shillings: if he dock his hair to insult him, 10 shillings: if he shave his head, like a priest's, but bind him not, 30 shillings: if he cut off his beard, 20 shillings: if he bind him, and then shave him like a priest, 60 shillings.

42. Also we command: if a man know that his foe be sitting at home, that he fight not against him before demanding justice. If the [wronged] man have power enough to besiege his foe in his house, let him keep him therein seven nights, and fight not against him, if he will remain inside; and then, after seven nights, if the foe will surrender and give up his weapons he shall keep him unscathed for thirty nights, and send notice to his kinsmen and friends. . . . If, however, a

¹ A man's oath was valued according to his standing, and could be expressed in terms of money, or, in Wessex, of hides of land. An oath of so many hides or shillings means the collective oath of a number of churls, or of a correspondingly smaller number of more distinguished men.

² I.e. at one-third of the man's wergeld.

man have not power to besiege his foe in his house, he shall ride to the aldorman and ask him for help. If he will not help him, he shall ride to the king before fighting. . . . We further declare that a man may fight on the side of his lord without becoming liable to vengeance, if his lord be attacked; and so may a lord on the side of his man. In like wise a man may fight by his kinsman born, if that kinsman be unjustly attacked, save only against his lord. That we do not allow.

VIII. ALFRED'S LETTER ON THE STATE OF LEARNING IN ENGLAND.

A copy was sent to every bishopric in Alfred's dominions, together with the king's translation of Gregory's *Cura Pastoralis* into English. The actual copy sent to Worcester is still extant in the Bodleian, and transcripts have been preserved of the copies sent to London and Sherborne. Both this and the Orosius have been edited by Sweet (*Early English Text Society*).

H. S. Hutton (H) . This book is to go to Worcester.

after MS- King Alfred bids greet bishop Wærferth with his words in loving and friendly wise: and I would have thee know that it has come very often into my mind, what wise counsellors there were of old throughout England, both spiritual and lay; and how happy were those times then throughout England; and how the kings who had the authority over the folk obeyed God and his messengers; and they both maintained peace, and morals, and authority within their kingdom, and also extended their borders; and what good success they had both with warfare and with wisdom; and also the spiritual orders, how eager they were both in teaching and in learning, and in all the services they owed to God; and how strangers came hither to this land in search of wisdom and learning; and how we now must get these things from abroad, if we are to have them. So utterly was learning fallen off in England that there were very few on this side of the Humber who could understand their service-books in English, or translate even a letter from Latin into English:

and I ween that there were not many beyond the Humber. So few were there of them that I cannot remember even a single one south of the Thames when I succeeded to the kingdom. Thanks be to Almighty God that we have now any supply of teachers. And so, I bid thee to do as I believe that thou thyself dost wish, that thou rid thyself of the cares of this world, as often as thou canst, that thou mayest apply the wisdom which God has given thee, wherever thou canst. Bethink thee what temporal punishments came upon us, in that we neither loved wisdom ourselves nor suffered other men to have it: we loved the name of Christian only, and very few of us loved the Christian virtues.

When I called all this to mind, then I remember also how I had seen, before it was all harried and burnt up, how the churches throughout all England stood filled with treasures and books. And there was also a great multitude of God's servants, but they could make very little use of the books, because they were not written in their own speech. As if they had said: 'Our forefathers, who held these places before us, loved wisdom, and through wisdom they got wealth, and left it to us. Here their track may still be seen, but we cannot follow it up, and so we have lost both the wealth and the wisdom, because we would not bend all our minds to following the track.'

Then, when I remembered all this, I wondered greatly concerning men of wise and good counsel who of old were throughout England, and had learned all these books fully, that they would turn no part of them into their own tongue. But then I soon made answer to myself and said: 'They did not ween that ever men would become so reckless, and learning so fall away; it was from deliberate purpose that they abstained from doing it, and wished that there should be greater wisdom here in this land, as we knew more tongues.' Then I remembered how the law was first known in Hebrew: and again, when the Greeks learned it, then they turned it all into their own tongue, and likewise all other books. And the Romans in like manner, when they learned it, they

turned all the books, through wise interpreters, into their own tongue. And also all other Christian people turned some part of these books into their own tongue.

Therefore it seems better to me, if it seems so also to you, that we too should turn into the tongue which we can all understand certain books which are most necessary for all men to know; and that we bring it about (as we very easily may, with God's help, if we have peace) that all the youth which now is in England of freemen who have wealth enough to be able to apply themselves to it, be set to learning, so long as they are good for no other business, till the time that they can well read anything written in English; let those, who are to be taught further, and set apart for a higher office [holy orders] be taught further in Latin.

When I remembered how the knowledge of Latin had before this fallen away throughout England, and yet many could read what was written in English, then I began, among the other diverse and manifold cares of this kingdom, to turn into English the book which is called in Latin *Pastoralis*, and in English the *Shepherd's Book*, sometimes word by word, sometimes sense by sense, as I learnt it from Plegmund my archbishop, and from Asser my bishop, and from Grimbold my mass-priest, and from John my mass-priest. And when I had learnt it, as best I could understand it, and as I could most clearly interpret it, I turned it into English; and to every bishopric in my kingdom will I send one: and on each there is an *æstel*¹ which is worth fifty mancuses. And I command in God's name that no man remove the *æstel*¹ from the book, nor the book from the minister: it is unknown how long there will be such learned bishops there as now, thanks be to God, there are almost everywhere. Therefore I wish

¹ The best interpretations of *æstel* are either (1) pointer or (2) cover, binding: the derivation in each case being from *hastula*, a little spear, then a thin piece of wood. The *æstel* must have been of beautiful workmanship, for in the days of Æthelstan the *mancus* (a gold coin) was the price of an ox. Compare what Asser tells us of the king's skilled workmen (above, p. 217).

that the books should always remain at the place, unless the bishop will have them with him, or the book be on loan anywhere, or anyone makes a copy.

IX. VOYAGES OF ALFRED'S CAPTAINS.

King Alfred translated into English the Universal History of Orosius (see above, p. 62) and, where he could, he corrected the geographical section of it. He supplemented this section by adding an account of the exploration of two of his sea-captains. One of these, Ohthere, was a Northman by birth, and his account is of special interest both for the light it throws upon the life of a people who have played so large a part in the making of England, and also for the information, incidentally given, as to the Continental home of the English (see above, p. 51). A translation into Modern English of these voyages was given in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations of the English Nation* (1598) and the translation below is based upon this, with necessary corrections.

Ohthere told his lord, king Alfred, that he dwelt furthest North of any other Northman. He said that he dwelt towards the North part of the land, by the West Sea: and affirmed that the land, notwithstanding it stretcheth marvellous far towards the North, yet it is all desert and not inhabited, unless it be very few places, here and there, where certain Finns dwell upon the coast, who live by hunting all the winter, and by fishing in summer. He said that upon a certain time he fell into a fantasie and desire to prove and know how far that land stretched Northward, and whether there were any habitation of men North, beyond the desert. . . .

[An account of Ohthere's voyage is then given. He reached the White Sea, and sailed up it so far as he could travel in five days.]

The principal purpose of his travel this way, besides the increase of the knowledge and discovery of these coasts and countries, was for the more commodity of fishing of horse-whales [walruses] which have in their teeth bones of great price and excellency, whereof he brought some unto the king. Their skins are also very good to make cables for ships, and so used. This kind of whale is much less than other kinds,

having not in length above seven ells. But as for the common kind of whales, the place of most and best hunting of them is in his own country; whereof some be 48 ells of length and some 50, of which sort he affirmed that he himself was one of six [captains] which in the space of two days killed three score. He was a man of exceeding wealth in such riches wherein the wealth of that country doth consist. At the same time that he came to the king, he had of his own breed 600 tame deer, of that kind which they call Reindeer; of which number six were decoy Reindeer, a beast of great value, and marvellously esteemed among the Finns, for that with them they catch the wild Reindeer. He was among the chief men of his country; and yet he had but 20 kine and 20 sheep and 20 swine, and that little which he tilled, he tilled it all with horses. But their principal wealth consisteth in the tribute which the Finns pay them, which is all in skins of wild beasts, feathers of birds, whale bones and cables, and ship-ropes made of whale's or seal's skin. Every man payeth according to his rank. The richest pay ordinarily 15 skins of martin, and 5 Reindeer skins and one bear skin and ten ambers of feathers; a coat of bear's skin or otter's skin, two cables threescore ells long apiece, the one made of whale's hide, the other of seal's.

He said, that the country of Norway was very long and very narrow. So much of it as either beareth any good pasture, or may be tilled, lieth upon the sea coast, which notwithstanding in some places is very rocky and stony: and all Eastward, all along against the inhabited land, lie wild and huge hills and mountains, which are in some places inhabited by the Finns. . . .

Ohthere said that the country wherein he dwelled was called Halgoland . . . and affirmed that there was no man dwelling to the North of him. From this country toward the South, there is a certain port called Sciringssalr,¹ whither he saith that a man was not able to sail in a month's space, if

¹ *Sciringes heal*: this was near Larvik at the entrance of the Christiania Fiord, some sixty miles from the modern capital Oslo.

he spent the nights on shore, and each day had the wind against him. . . . At Sciringssalr there entreth into the land a main gulf of the sea,¹ which is so broad that a man cannot see over it: and on the other side over against the same is Jutland and then *Sillende*. This sea stretcheth many hundred miles up into the land.² From Sciringssalr he said that he sailed in five days to the port which is called *æt Hæthum* [Sleswick], which lieth between the countries of the Wends, the Saxons, and Angel, and is subject to the Danes. And as he sailed thitherward from Sciringssalr he had upon his larboard 'Denmark,'³ and on his starboard the main sea, for the space of three days. And two days before he arrived he had on his starboard Jutland and *Sillende*⁴ and many islands. In that country dwelt the Englishmen, before they came into this land. And these two days he had upon his larboard the islands that are subject to Denmark.

[Wulfstan's voyage in the Baltic then follows, with an account of the customs of the Esths.]

X. FROM THE WILL OF KING ALFRED.

Alfred's Will (in English) has been frequently printed: the latest edition is in Harmer, *English Historical Documents*, 1914. Alfred gives an account of the arrangement which he had made with his brothers as to the division of their inheritance.

. . . But it came to pass that we were all sore harassed by the heathen folk: then we spoke concerning our children, that they would need to be cared for, whatsoever in these disasters

¹ The Skagerrack, Cattegat, and Baltic.

² Ohthere realises that the Baltic is landlocked. The classical geographers had believed that the Baltic came round into the Atlantic again, making Scandinavia an island.

³ 'Denmark' is what we should call Southern Sweden, part of which was at this date, and long after, an integral part of Denmark.

⁴ *Sillende* is either *Sinlendi*, a district to the South of Jutland, or *Silund* (Sjælland, Zealand). Alfred's words certainly seem to imply that the old home of the English included, in addition to Sleswick and Jutland, 'many islands.'

might happen to us. When we were assembled at *Swinbeorgum*, then we agreed, and the 'witan' of Wessex witnessed it, that whichever of us survived the other, he should give to the other's children the lands which we ourselves had gained, and the lands which king Æthelwulf gave us in the lifetime of Æthelbald. . . .

But it came to pass that king Æthelred died. . . . Then I produced the will of king Æthelwulf in our assembly at *Lan-gandene*, and it was read before all the 'witan' of Wessex. When it was read, then I begged them for love of me (and I gave them my pledge that I would never bear them any grudge for speaking their mind justly) that none of them, for love or fear of me, should hesitate to declare what was the law of the nation, lest any man should say that I had wronged my kin, older or younger. Then they all affirmed and said that they could not think of any more just title. . . .

I, Alfred, king of Wessex by the grace of God, declare how I wish it to be after my day, concerning my goods. . . . To my two sons 1000 pounds, 500 to each. To my eldest daughter, and the second, and the youngest, and to Ealhswith, to the four 400 pounds, 100 to each. To each of my aldormen 100 mancuses,¹ and likewise to Æthelhelm and Æthelwold and Osferth; and to aldorman Æthelred a sword worth 100 mancuses. And to the men who follow me, to whom I have now this Eastertide made gifts, let them have 200 pounds divided among them, to each as is fitting, according to the proportion in which I have just made my gifts. And to the archbishop, 100 mancuses, and to bishop Esne, and to bishop Wærferth, and to the bishop of Sherborne. Also for me, and for my father, and for the friends for whom he did and I do pray, let 200 pounds be divided: 50 to mass-priests throughout my kingdom, 50 to poor servants of God, 50 to the needy poor, 50 to the church where I shall rest. I do not know of a surety whether there is as much money as this, or whether there is more, but I think there is. . . .

¹ The 'mancus' was a gold coin, the value of an ox. See above, p. 224.

And I pray, in the name of God and His saints, that no kinsman or heir of mine oppress any of the dependents for whom I have paid ; the West-Saxon 'witan' declared that I may leave them bond or free, whichever I choose. But I, for the love of God and for the welfare of my soul, will that they have their freedom and their choice. And in the name of the Living God I command that no man, by exaction of money or by any other means, prevent them from choosing what lord they will. . . . And let such provision be made in live-stock for the good of my soul as may be, and as is fitting, and as ye wish to grant me.

XI. KING ALFRED AS ARBITRATOR.

From a letter addressed to King Edward the Elder. [English.] Thorpe, *Diplomatarium Anglicum*, 169 ; Birch, *Cart. Sax.*, No. 236 ; Harmer, p. 30.

My Lord, I will make known to thee how it was concerning the land at Fonthill, the five hides concerning which Æthelm Higa has a suit. When Helmstan committed felony by stealing Æthelred's belt, then Æthelm Higa, together with other claimants, began to make a claim against him, and wished to get the estate from him by process of law. Then Helmstan came to me, and begged me to speak on his behalf, because I had received him at the bishop's hand [i.e. had been his sponsor] before he committed the felony. Then I spoke for him, and interceded on his behalf to king Alfred. Then Alfred (God reward his soul) gave Helmstan leave to avail himself of the protection of the law against Æthelm Higa, . . . and commanded that there should be an arbitration. . . . But Æthelm Higa did not fully consent to this. So at last we went to the king, and told him all the conclusion we had come to, and why. And Æthelm Higa himself stood there with us. The king stood—he was washing his hands—within the chamber at Wardour. When he had finished washing, he asked Æthelm Higa why he did not agree to the conclusion to which we had come, and said that he could not think out

anything more just than that Helmstan should make the oath, if he could. Then I said that he would try, and asked the king to fix a day; and he did. Then, on the appointed day, Helmstan produced the oath to the full: . . . we all rode [thither]: Wihtbord with me and Byrthelm with Æthelm Higa. And we all heard him produce the oath in full. Then we all said that the suit was ended, in that the king's decision had been carried out. And, my lord, when can any suit be ended, if it be not ended with money or with oath? Or, if every decision which king Alfred gave is to be set aside, when shall we have done with debating? . . .

XII. GRANT TO ST. AUGUSTINE'S, CANTERBURY.

Thorpe, *Diplomatarium Anglicum*, p. 479; Birch, *Cart. Sax.*, No. 501; Harmer, p. 9. [English.]

In nomine Domini. Ealhburch has ordained, with the counsel of her friends, that every year there is to be given to the Community of St. Augustine's, from the estate at Brabourne, forty ambers of malt, and a full grown ox, and four wethers, and 240 loaves, and a wey of fat bacon and of cheese, and four fothers of wood and twenty hens. Whatsoever man holds the land is to give these things for the souls of Ealdred and Ealzburg. And the Community are to sing every day after their 'verse' the psalm *Exaudiat te Dominus* on their behalf. Whatsoever man violates this, may he be cut off from God and from all the saints and from the holy company in this life and in eternity. Hereafter are the names of the men who witnessed this agreement: Drihtnoth, abbot, [and 22 others].

If, however, it should come to pass (as we hope it may not) that any tribulation should come upon us through the heathen folk or through any other calamity, so that that year it cannot be paid, let it be given twofold the next year. If it still cannot be paid, let it be given threefold in the third year. If the landholder yet cannot nor will not pay, let the land and the title-deeds be given to the Community of St. Augustine's.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TENTH CENTURY (900-991).

THE TRIUMPHS OF THE HOUSE OF ALFRED.

- I. Edward's wars with the Danes, from the *Chronicle*.
- II. The Mercian Register, or Annals of Æthelflæd.
- III. From Æthelstan to Æthelred the Unready, from the *Chronicle* (*Parker manuscript*).
- IV. Entries from *Chronicles* D and E.
- V. From the Life of S. Æthelwold by Ælfric: The New Monasticism.
- VI. From the Life of S. Dunstan, by B. : Ragging in the Tenth Century ; Reconciliation of king Edmund and Dunstan.
- VII. From the Life of S. Oswald, archbishop of York : The Coronation of Edgar ; The Death of Edward the Martyr.
- VIII. Grant by queen Eadgifu to Canterbury Cathedral.
- IX. Manumission of a slave by Æthelstan.
- X. From the Laws : Ordinance concerning the hundred.
- XI. Charter of Edgar to Ely.
- XII. Scandinavian York, and its last king, Eric Blood-axe.

FOR the reign of Edward the Elder we have a fairly full account, from the West Saxon point of view, in the *Parker MS.* of the *Chronicle*. A very brief chronicle of the wars with the Danes, from the Mercian point of view, has been inserted into certain MSS. of the *Chronicle*. This Mercian chronicle is given in full here (under the name of the *Mercian Register* or Annals of Æthelflæd). The *West Saxon Chronicle* is too lengthy to be given in full : the annals of 900, 904, 920-24 are given as specimens. The chronology of this period is very confused : and this confusion has been rendered worse by the fact that in the *Parker MS.* of the *Chronicle*, as stated above (p. xxiii), a corrector has added one year to all the years from

892 to 929 inclusive. The altered dates are given in the editions of Thorpe, Earle and Plummer. The original dates are restored in this translation; when that is done, the *Mercian Register* and the *West Saxon Chronicle* are in substantial agreement: both make Æthelred, lord of Mercia, die in 911, and Edward in 924.

There remain discrepancies, however. The death of Ealhswith is placed in 902 in the *Mercian Register*, in 904 in the *West Saxon Chronicle*, and in the same years, respectively 902 and 904, a battle is recorded between the Kentish men and the Danes, which is obviously one and the same fight. This is proved by the *Grant* of queen Eadgifu (*Extract VIII.*). The battle under 902 in the *Mercian Register* is called the fight at the Holme; and this is the name given to it in the *Grant* of queen Eadgifu. But the same grant mentions that in that battle aldorman Sigelm fell; and Sigelm is reported as having fallen in the battle which the *West Saxon Chronicle* places under 904.

From Æthelstan to Æthelred the Unready the *Chronicles* become quite barren; and for half a century we have nothing but a few obits and metrical pieces, only one of which—the *Battle of Brunanburh*—has any literary value. Yet these fifty years were the most successful and glorious in the whole Anglo-Saxon period. (Our ignorance of the Roman Empire under Trajan may be compared.) During the reign of Æthelred the Unready the *Chronicle* revives, and, as the disasters of that reign thicken, it becomes quite vigorous.

But till then we have to piece out our information by hints from the biographies of the three great ecclesiastics, Dunstan, Æthelwold and Oswald, who flourished under these pious kings. These biographies are contemporary, and invaluable; they are all three in Latin. The life of Oswald was written by a monk of Ramsey. The writer cites Archbishop Ælfric as witness to the truth of miracles wrought at the tomb of Edward the Martyr: and this seems to place the biography between 995 and 1005. Oswald had died in 992.

The life of Æthelwold was written by abbot Ælfric, the

Anglo-Saxon homilist and translator. The prologue tells us that Æthelwold had been dead twenty years; this would place its composition about 1004: and the dedication to Kenulf, bishop of Winchester 1005-6, confirms this.

The story of S. Dunstan was written by one of whom we only know that he was a priest, a Saxon, and that his name began with B. This *Life* was dedicated to Ælfric, who was archbishop of Canterbury from 995 to 1005, and who must be distinguished from his namesake, the homilist and author of the life of Æthelwold. B.'s *Life of Dunstan* was sent to Abbo of Fleury, to be put into verse; and Abbo was killed by rioters in 1004. A round date for the *Life* is therefore c. 1000, a dozen years after Dunstan's death.

I. EDWARD'S WARS WITH THE DANES.

From the *Parker* or A-manuscript of the *Chronicle*.

900. [Death of Alfred: see above, p. 215.] Then Edward his son succeeded him. Then Æthelwald, Edward's cousin, seized Wimborne and Twinham [Christchurch, Hants] without the consent of the king and his 'witan.' Then the king rode with his army, and camped at Badbury, against Wimborne. And Æthelwald remained within the place, with the men who had joined him: and he had barricaded all the gates against them, and said that there he would either live or lie dead. Notwithstanding which, he stole away by night to the Danes in Northumbria; and the king commanded to ride after him, but they could not overtake him. Then they seized the wife whom he had wedded without the king's leave and against the bishop's hest, because she had been hallowed as a nun. . . .

904. Æthelwald seduced the Danes in East Anglia to break the peace, so that they harried over Mercia till they came to Cricklade, and crossed the Thames, and took, both in Braden [Braden Forest in Wiltshire] and around it all that they could seize, and then returned home. Then king Edward followed them, as soon as he could collect his army, and harried all

their land, between the dykes and the Great Ouse, as far North as the Fens. When he wished to withdraw, he commanded it to be proclaimed throughout all his army that they should withdraw in a body. Then the Kentish men remained behind, in spite of his command, and of the seven messengers whom he had sent to them. Then the Danes overtook them, and fought with them there, and there was the aldorman Sigulf slain, and aldorman Sigelm, and Eadwold the king's thane, and abbot Cenulf, and Sigebrecht son of Sigulf, and Eadwald son of Acca, and many others also, though I have named the most illustrious. On the Danish side was slain their king Eric, and the ætheling Æthelwald who seduced them to break the peace, and Byrhtsige son of the ætheling Beornoth, and Ysopa and Oseytel, two Danish nobles, and many others also, whom, as now, we cannot name. And there was great slaughter on either hand; and more of the Danes were slain than of the Kentish men, though the Danes remained in possession of the battle-field.

And Ealhswith [widow of Alfred] died in this same year. . . .

920. In this year, before Easter, king Edward bade take Towcester [Northants.] and build it: and again, after that, in the same year, at Rogation-tide he bade build the *burh* at *Wigingamere*.

The same summer, between Lammas and midsummer, the Danes broke the peace, from Northampton and from Leicester, and thence southward, and went to Towcester, and fought all day against the town, and thought to storm it. But the men inside defended it till help came. Then the Danes left it, and went away; and immediately after this they made raids by night, and came upon men unawares, and took much plunder, both in men and cattle, between Bernwood Forest [Bucks.] and Aylesbury.

At the same time the Danes went from Huntingdon and East Anglia, and made the fortress at Tempsford [Beds.] and occupied and strengthened it, and left the other at Huntingdon, thinking that from Tempsford they could ravage more of the land. And they marched upon Bedford: and then the

men who were in Bedford marched against them, fought them, and routed them, and slew a large part of them.

After this a great Danish army assembled from East Anglia and Mercia and went to the *burh* at Wigingamere, and beset it, and fought against it till far on in the day, and took the cattle around it: but the men within defended the *burh*, so that the Danes left it and departed. In the same summer, a great muster assembled in king Edward's realm, of the men from the nearest towns who were then able to go, and they went to Tempsford, and beset the *burh*, and fought there until they stormed it, and slew the king, and earl Toglos, and earl Manna his son, and his brother, and all within who made any resistance; and they took the rest prisoners, and everything within. Immediately after, there was a great muster, in autumn, from Kent, Surrey, and Essex, and from all the towns in the neighbourhood. And they went to Colchester and beset the *burh* and fought till they won it, and slew all within, and took everything, save the men who fled over the wall.

Afterwards, the same autumn, a great force of Danes gathered from East Anglia, both of the inhabitants, and of vikings whom they had seduced to join them. And they thought to avenge their losses: and they went to Maldon, and beset the *burh*, and fought till help came from outside to the garrison. Then the Danes withdrew: but the men from the town and those who had come to their help followed them up and routed them, and slew many hundreds, both vikings and others.

Immediately after, the same autumn, king Edward with the West Saxon army went to Passenham [Northants.] and camped there while a stone wall was built round the *burh* at Towcester. And earl Thurferth, and the Danish nobles, and all the Danes belonging to Northampton, and as far north as the Welland, submitted to him and sought him as their lord and their chief.

Then that levy returned home, and the other levy was called out, and marched to the *burh* at Huntingdon, and by king

Edward's orders repaired and renewed it where it had been broken down. And all the inhabitants who were left turned to king Edward and sought his peace and guardianship. The same year, before Martinmas [Nov. 11] king Edward with the West Saxon army went to Colchester, and repaired and renewed the *burh* where it had been broken. And many people, both in East Anglia and Essex, who had been under the rule of the Danes, turned to him. And all the Danes in East Anglia made a covenant with him, that they would everything which he would, and that, both by sea and by land, they would keep the peace with all who were in the king's peace. Then the Danes belonging to Cambridge chose him separately as their lord and chief, and confirmed it with oaths, even as he decreed it.

921. In this year, between Rogation Tide and midsummer, king Edward went with his army to Stamford, and bade build the *burh* on the south side of the river. And all the people who belonged to the northern *burh* submitted, and sought him as their lord. And whilst he was there, his sister Æthelflæd died at Tamworth, twelve nights before midsummer. Then he rode to Tamworth, and all the people in Mercia who had been subject to Æthelflæd turned to him : and the kings in Wales, Howel, Cleauc and Ieothwel, and all the Welsh, sought him as their lord. Then he went thence to Nottingham, and occupied the town, and ordered that it should be repaired, and planted both with Englishmen and Danes. And all the people in Mercia, both Danish and English, submitted to him. . . .

923. In this year, before midsummer, king Edward went with his army to Nottingham, and bade a *burh* to be built on the south side of the river, opposite the other, and a bridge over the Trent between the two. And thence he went in the Peak district, to Bakewell, and bade build a *burh* in the neighbourhood, and garrison it. And the king of the Scots, and all the people of the Scots chose him to father and lord ; and so did Rægnald, and the sons of Eadulf, and all those who dwell in Northumbria, whether English, or Danish, or North-

men, or others, and also the king of the Strathclyde Welsh, and all the Strathclyde Welsh.

924. King Edward died, and Æthelstan his son succeeded.

II. THE MERCIAN REGISTER OR ANNALS OF ÆTHELFLED (902-924).

(Given completely from *Chronicle B (Tiberius, A. vi)* and *C (Tiberius, B. i)*).

902. Ealhswith died. And the same year was the fight at the Holme between the Kentish men and the Danes.

904. Eclipse of the moon.

905. A comet appeared.

907. Chester was rebuilt.

909. St. Oswald's body was brought from Bardney [Lincolnshire] to Mercia.

910. In this year the English and the Danes fought at Tettanhall [Staffs.] and the English had the victory. And the same year Æthelflæd built the *burh* at *Bremesburh*.

911. Then, in the next year, died Æthelred, lord of the Mercians. *Kings*

912. Æthelflæd, lady of the Mercians, on the holy eve of the Invention of the Sacred Cross [May 3] came to Scergeat [? Shrewsbury] and there built the *burh*: and the same year the one at Brigg [Bridgenorth, Shropshire].

913. By the favour of God, Æthelflæd, lady of the Mercians, went with all the Mercians to Tamworth, and there built the *burh*, in the early summer; and before Lammas [Aug. 1] the one at Stafford.

914. Then, the next year after that, the one at Eddisbury [Cheshire] in the early summer, and in the same year again in the late autumn the one at Warwick.

915. Then, the next year after this, after midwinter, that at *Cyricburg* and at *Weardburg*: and the same year, before midwinter, that at *Rumcofa*.

916. Abbot Ecgriht was guiltless slain,¹ before midsummer,

¹ Apparently by the Welsh.

the 16th Kal. July. On the same day was the feast of St. Ciricius the martyr, and his companions. And three nights after, Æthelflæd sent an army against the Welsh, and took *Brecenan mere* [? Brecon] and there took thirty-four persons, one being the wife of the king.

917. Æthelflæd, lady of the Mercians, God helping her, before Lammas got the town which is called Derby, with all that belonged thereto. There were also slain four of her thanes, within the gates, which was a sorrow to her.

918. She got into her power, by the help of God; early in the year by peaceful means, the *burh* at Leicester: and most of the Danes belonging thereto became subject to her. And the people of York had promised her—some had given pledge, and some confirmed it with oaths—that they would be under her government. But very soon after they had made that agreement, she died, twelve nights before midsummer, at Tamworth, in the eighth year of her rule with right lordship over the Mercians. And her body lies in Gloucester in the east porch of S. Peter's church.

919. The daughter of Æthelred, lord of the Mercians, was deprived of all authority in Mercia, and led into Wessex, three weeks before midwinter. Her name was Ælfwyn.

921. King Edward built the burh at *Cledemutha*.

924. King Edward died at Farndon in Mercia, and Ælfwerd his son very soon afterwards at Oxford, and their bodies lie at Winchester. And Æthelstan was chosen king by the Mercians, and consecrated at Kingston. And he gave his sister. . . .

III. FROM ÆTHELSTAN TO ÆTHELRED THE UNREADY.

(From the *Parker* or A-manuscript of the *Chronicle*.)

934. King Æthelstan went into Scotland, both with land-force and ship-force, and ravaged much of it.

937.¹ Æthelstan King

Lord among Earls,

Bracelet-bestower and

¹ As translated by Tennyson.

Baron of Barons,
He with his brother,
Edmund Atheling,
Gained a lifelong
Glory in battle,
Slew with the sword-edge
There by Brunanburh,
Brake the shield-wall
Hew'd the linden-wood
Hack'd the battleshield,
Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands. . . .
 We the West-Saxons
 Long as the daylight
 Lasted, in companies
Troubled the track of the host that we hated,
Grimly with swords that were sharp from the grind-
stone,
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before us.
 Mighty the Mercian,
 Hard was his hand-play,
 Sparing not any of
 Those that with Anlaf,
 Warriors over the
 Weltering waters
 Borne on the bark's-bosom
 Drew to this island :
 Doom'd to the death.
Five young kings put asleep by the sword-stroke,
Seven strong Earls of the army of Anlaf
Fell on the war-field, numberless numbers,
Shipmen and Scotsmen . . .
 Also the crafty one,
 Constantinus,
 Crept to the North again,
 Hoar headed hero ! . . .
 Then with their nail'd prows
 Parted the Norsemen, a

Blood reddened relic of

Javelins over

The jarring breaker, the deep-sea billow,

Shaping their way toward Dyflen¹ again

Shamed in their souls. . . .

940. King Æthelstan died, on the 6th Kal. Nov., forty years, save one night, after king Alfred died. And Edmund ætheling succeeded. He was eighteen years old. . . .

942. In this year king Edmund, lord of the English

Doer of deeds, and helper of kin

Overran Mercia, as bounded by Dore

By Whitwell Gate, and Humber flood,

Broad ocean stream, the Boroughs Five

Leicester town, and Lincoln too

Nottingham, and Stamford also

And Derby as well. The Danes were before

Under the Norsemen, by force constrained,

Under the heathen, in captive bonds

A lengthy time, till he released them

Through his valour, the Shelter of Warriors

Son of king Edward, Edmund the king.²

944. King Edmund subdued all Northumbria, and put to flight two kings, Anlaf Syhtricsson and Rægenald Guthferthsson.

945. King Edmund harried all Cumberland, and gave it all to Malcolm, king of the Scots, on condition that he should be his fellow-worker, both by sea and by land.

946. King Edmund died on S. Augustine's mass-day [May 26th]; he ruled for six years and a half. Then Eadred ætheling, his brother, succeeded, and reduced all Northumbria into his power. And the Scots gave him oaths, that they would all that he would. . . .

¹ Dublin. Brunanburh was naturally remembered in Ireland. The *Annals of Ulster* record it, and the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* gave the names of the chiefs who fell on the Danish side, and the numbers. See O'Donovan, *Annals of the Four Masters*, 1851, I, 633.

² See 'The redemption of the Five Boroughs,' by Allen Mawer, in the *English Historical Review*, xxxviii., 551-7 (1923).

955. King Eadred died . . . and then Eadwig, son of Edmund, succeeded.

958. King Eadwig died on the Kalends of October, and Edgar his brother succeeded. . . .

962. . . . And then, in this year, there was a great pestilence, and the great fire in London, and Paul's minster was burnt: and the same year was it again established. . . .

963. In this year abbot Æthelwold succeeded to the bishopric of Winchester.

964. King Edgar drove out the secular priests from the Old Minster and the New Minster in Winchester, and from Chertsey, and from Milton, and planted them with monks. . . .

973. Edgar was ruler of the English

With a mighty retinue hallowed as king

In the ancient town Acemannesceaster

Which those on this island by another name

Have called Bath. . . .

975. The joys of earth Edgar ended

King of the English chose him the other light

The light fair and winsome . . . Then his son

A child ungrown took the kingdom

Ruler of earls Edward his name. ¶

978. King Edward was slain. In this same year Æthelred ætheling, his brother, took the kingdom.

984. The benevolent bishop Æthelwold died. And the hallowing of bishop Ælfheah, who succeeded him, and who by another name was called Godwin, was on the 14th Kal. Nov.; and he took the bishop's chair at Winchester on the mass-day of the two apostles S. Simon and S. Jude [Oct. 28].

IV. ENTRIES FROM CHRONICLES D AND E.

These Chronicles (*Cotton, Tiberius B. iv* and *Bodleian, Laud, 636*) are copied from one sent to the North. And later they must in some way have come into contact with each other or with a common source, as they have certain entries in common, which do not appear in the other Chronicles, except in so far as they have been copied at a later date into the compilation F (*Cotton, Domitian A. viii*). At

some date, which cannot be precisely fixed but was after 966, these Chronicles were both removed South, as we shall see below: D to the Worcester diocese, E to Canterbury. The section from 978-81 is among the most marked of the features they possess in common.

972. Edgar the ætheling was hallowed king on the mass-day of Pentecost,¹ on the 5th of the Ides of May, the thirteenth year after he succeeded to the kingdom, at the Hot Baths; and he was then aged thirty winters, less one. And soon after that, the king led all his ships to Chester. And then there came to meet him six kings. And they all pledged themselves unto him, that they would be his fellow-workers, by sea and by land.

978. In this year all the senior 'witan' of England fell from an upper floor at Calne, save that the holy archbishop Dunstan alone stood upon a beam. And some were there greatly injured: and some did not escape with their lives.

979. King Edward was slain at eventide at the 'gate of Corfe,' on the 15th of the Kalends of April. And he was buried at Wareham, without any royal honour. No worse deed than this was done among the English, since first they came to Britain. Men murdered him, but God glorified him. In life he was an earthly king, and now, after death, he is a heavenly saint. . . . Those who would not before bow to his body when he lived, now humbly on their knees bow to his dead bones. Now can we perceive that the wisdom, contrivances and counsels of men are nothing worth against the purpose of God.

And Æthelred succeeded, and very soon after was hallowed king at Kingston, with great joy, by the 'witan' of England.

¹ The exact date given here, Pentecost = May 11, proves that the year is wrong, and that the *Parker Chronicle* is correct in its date, 973 (Plummer).

V. FROM THE LIFE OF S. ÆTHELWOLD BY ÆLFRIC.

(Stevenson, *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, Vol. II, Appendix, p. 255, *Rolls Series*.)

The New Monasticism.

Now at that time, in the Old Minster [at Winchester], where the seat of the bishop was, there were clerks of evil manners, beset by pride, insolence, and evil-living, in so much that some of them disdained to celebrate their masses in their turn. They married wives contrary to the law, and then repudiated them and took others; they were given over to gluttony and drunkenness. Saint Æthelwold was unable to tolerate this, and, after licence received from king Edgar, he quickly expelled from the Minster those unspeakable blasphemers of God, and, in their place, brought in monks from Abingdon, being to them at once both abbot and bishop.

Now it happened, when the monks coming from Abingdon were standing at the door of the church, that the clerks within were finishing Mass, singing for the Communion, 'Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with reverence; get you discipline, lest you perish from the right way.' It was as if they were saying, 'We do not wish to serve God, nor to keep His discipline; but do ye so, lest, like unto us, ye perish.' And the monks, when they heard their chant, said one to another, 'Why do we tarry outside? Lo, we are exhorted to enter.'

Moreover, the king sent one of his most eminent thanes, by name Wulfstan, with the bishop. And Wulfstan, by the king's authority, commanded the clerks forthwith, either to give place to the monks, or to accept the monastic habit. But the clerks, execrating the monastic life, forthwith departed from the church. Nevertheless, later, three of them were converted to the life according to the Rule, namely Eadsin, Wulfsin, and Wilstan. . . .

It came to pass after this, that poison was given to the bishop to drink in his hall, as he was taking breakfast with his guests. This was done by envy of certain clerks, so that,

after the bishop's death, they might be able to enjoy their old and evil manner of life. It was the bishop's custom after eating three or four pieces, to drink (in moderation) by reason of his infirmity; and, not knowing that poison had been put before him, he drank the whole cup. Forthwith his face grew pale, and he felt in his bowels the excessive torture of the poison. He rose from the table, but had scarcely reached his bed before the death-threatening poison had crept through all his limbs. But at length he began to reprove himself 'Where then is thy faith? Where are the words of Christ, with which He spake, "And if ye shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt you."' By these words, and others of like kind, his faith was kindled, and overcame the deadly draught which he had drunk. He rose up the more quickly and returned to the hall with good cheer enough, but took no steps against his poisoner.

Then Æthelwold spread his wings yet further, and, with the consent of king Edgar, he expelled the clerks from the New Minster.

VI. FROM THE LIFE OF S. DUNSTAN, BY B.

(Stubbs, *Memorials of S. Dunstan*, pp. 12 sq., 23 sqq., *Rolls Series*, 1874.)

(a) Ragging in the Tenth Century.

[An account is given of Dunstan's studies at Glastonbury.] Whilst Dunstan was engaged in these good works, certain of his comrades and kinsfolk, who envied his righteous acts . . . said that he was learning, from these salutary books and expert men, not things profitable for the salvation of souls, but the vain songs of ancestral heathendom. . . . Persevering in their machinations, they made a false accusation to the king against him, and caused him, whom, had they been wise, they would have specially loved, to be driven from their company. Then, in cruel and impious rage, they seized Dunstan, innocent and patient as a lamb, and threw him, bound hand and foot, into a muddy swamp. To degrade him further,

they spurned him with their feet, till they had wreaked their malicious will by defiling him in the foul slough. Then they left him, and he rose with difficulty from the swamp, and took his way to one of his friends, who dwelt a mile distant, to wash himself there. This friend's fierce dogs came rushing and barking at him, thinking him, all defiled with filth as he was, rather a monster than a man. Yet when they heard his voice, as he spoke kindly to them, they recognised him and stopped barking. Then he exclaimed, sighing from the bottom of his heart: 'Oh cruel madness of my kinsfolk, changed from human love to dog-like hate! The dogs, albeit devoid of reason, have shown to me humanity and love, wagging their tails and fawning upon me: but my kin, forgetful of humanity, have attacked and worried me like dogs.'

(b) Reconciliation of king Edmund and Dunstan.

Dunstan, after a sharp illness, becomes a monk, and after the accession of king Edmund rises in favour at court. He is a second time slandered, and when the court is at Cheddar, is driven from it, and is about to leave the kingdom. Meantime the king goes hunting:

Many stags were started by the manifold sound of horns and barking of dogs, among which the king, alone, with his pack of hounds, pursued one all day. . . . Now there is in the neighbourhood of Cheddar amongst many others one precipice, an abyss of wonderful and immense depth. To that the stag came in its flight, I know not why, unless because it was so ordained in the secret will of God, and plunged down headlong into the depths of the precipice, with the dogs which followed it; they rushed together to their death, and were dashed to pieces. The king likewise, following the stag and the dogs, came at a great gallop; and forthwith as soon as he saw the precipice, he tried, with all his strength, to rein in his horse: but such was the strength of his horse's neck that he could not do this. What more? He lost all hope of life, and commended his soul into the hands of God: yet he said within himself, 'I give thanks to thee, Most High,

that I cannot remember to have done evil to anyone in these days, save only to Dunstan : and should my life be saved I will put that right, and will be reconciled to him with prompt good will.' No sooner was this said, than the horse stopped, on the brink of the precipice, terrible to speak of : . . . Then he, with heart and mouth, rendered great thanks to God for the saving of his life, knowing full well, and often turning it over in his mind, that it was for the sake of that great man that he had been brought to the very brink of death. Then he went home, and ordered Saint Dunstan to be called to him with great haste. When he had come, the king said to him : 'Saddle a horse as quickly as possible for thyself, to go with me, whither I am going with few companions.' And forthwith they mounted their horses and took the way which leads to Glastonbury . . . and when they arrived there, they entered the churches of God to pray, as was fitting. And when he had prayed, and wiped his eyes from the stream of tears, the king again called to him Dunstan the servant of God. He seized his hand and kissed it, as a sign of reconciliation, and maybe also of honour, and leading Dunstan to the priestly chair he placed him in it, and said . . . Be thou the faithful abbot of this church. . . .

VII. FROM THE LIFE OF S. OSWALD, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

(Raine, *Historians of the Church of York*, Vol. I, *Rolls Series*.)

(a) The Coronation of Edgar by Dunstan and Oswald.¹

Then the two bishops took the hands of the king, and led him to the church, whilst this antiphon was sung : 'Strong be thy hand, and high thy right hand : Righteousness and

¹Dr. Armitage Robinson has shown that the anonymous author of this life had before him a text of the English Coronation Service, either that extant in *MS. Cotton, Claudius A. iii*, or one very like it. This Order Dr. Robinson believes to have been drawn up by Dunstan, who crowned both Edgar and his sons, Edward and Ethelred. (See 'The Coronation Order in the Tenth Century,' by J. A. Robinson in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, xix., 56, etc. (1918).)

Equity are the habitation of thy seat: Mercy and Truth shall go before thy face' (Ps. lxxxix. 14, 15). When they reached the church, and the king prostrated himself before the altar, having first removed the crown from his head, archbishop Dunstan began with a loud voice to sing the *Te Deum*. Nor could he abstain from weeping, by reason of his joy over the king's humility, knowing that the nation was not worthy to have a king, so humble, and also so wise. And when the *Te Deum* was finished, the bishops raised the king from the ground. And, replying to the questions of the archbishop, he made three vows:

Firstly, I promise that the Church of God, and all Christian people within my dominion, shall at all time be assured of true peace.

Secondly, I promise that I will forbid robbery, and all unrighteous dealings, to persons of every rank.

Thirdly, that in all judgments I will enjoin justice and mercy, that so a clement and a merciful God may show his mercy unto me and unto you.

When these vows had been made, the archbishop stood, and prayed the prayers written in the office: followed by Oswald. . . . And after the consecration they anointed the king. . . . After the anointing the archbishop gave him the ring, and girded him with the sword, and after that placed the crown upon his head, and gave the benediction. Then he gave him the sceptre and rod . . . and celebrated Mass (pp. 437-8).

(b) The Death of Edward the Martyr.

When [Edgar], the glory of chieftains and ruler of all Albion, was taken from the turmoil of this shifting world . . . certain of the leaders wished to chose the king's elder son, named Edward, though others wished for the younger [Æthelred], because he seemed to all gentle in speech and deed. For the elder brother inspired not only fear, but terror. . . . On a certain day, at evening, having been elected king, Edward came to the house where his beloved brother dwelt with the queen, wishing for the loving company

of his brother ; and, as was fit, the chief men who dwelt with the queen, Æthelred's mother, came out to meet him. But they had taken an evil counsel among themselves. . . . They all stood round him armed, among them the cup-bearer, carrying out his office. For the worthy king had very few knights with him, because he feared no one, 'trusting in the Lord, and in the power of His might.' For he had been well taught in the divine law by Bishop Sidemann [of Crediton] and was strong in body and valiant. . . . The knights then pressed upon him, and one seized his right hand, as if to kiss it, whilst another stabbed him on the left. And he exclaimed, 'What do ye, breaking my right arm?' and suddenly fell down dead from his horse. . . . The King of Kings permitted him to be buried without such honour as later was granted unto him. For twelve months after . . . came the noble aldorman Ælfhere [of Mercia], with a multitude of people, and ordered his body to be disinterred; and when this was done it was found free from all decay. . . . And famous knights carried the body to the place where they buried it honourably, and where masses are sung for the good of his soul, as the aldorman commanded (pp. 449-51).

VIII. GRANT BY QUEEN EADGIFU TO CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

This grant has been frequently printed, e.g. in Thorpe, *Diplomatarium Anglicum*, 201, 204, and in Harmer, 37 ; also in Kemble, Birch, and the *Ord. Survey Facsimiles*. There is both an English and a Latin version ; the English is here followed.

Eadgifu makes known to the archbishop, and to the community at Christ Church, how her land at Cooling came to her. True it is, that her father left her the land and the title-deed thereto, as he lawfully received them, as an inheritance from his ancestors. Now it happened that her father borrowed thirty pounds from Goda, and handed to him the land as pledge ; and Goda had it seven winters. Then it happened, about that time, that all the men of Kent

were called up to the battle at 'Holm.' Then Sigehelm, her father, would not go to the war with any man's money unrepaid, and he repaid Goda thirty pounds, and he bequeathed his land to his daughter Eadgifu, and gave her the deed. When Sigehelm had fallen in battle, Goda denied that the money had been repaid, and refused to restore the land till the sixth year after. Then Byrhsige Dyring kept urging the claim of Eadgifu, till the 'witan' of that time ordained that Eadgifu should clear her father by [an oath of value equivalent to]¹ the sum concerned. And she thereupon produced the oath at Aylesford in the presence of all the people: and there she cleared her father, as to the repayment, by an oath of thirty pounds. But still she could not get possession of the land till her friends persuaded king Edward to tell Goda that he must give up that land, or he should hold none. So then Goda gave it up.

Then, in course of time,² it came to pass that the king was so wroth with Goda that he was deprived of all the deeds and land which he possessed. And the king gave Goda and all his property, deeds and lands, to Eadgifu, to deal with as she thought fit. Then Eadgifu said that for the fear of God she dare not do to him as he had done to her, and she gave him back all his lands save two ploughlands at Osterland; but she would not give back the deeds, till she knew how faithfully he would behave to her in the matter of the lands.

Then king Edward died, and Æthelstan came to the throne. When Goda saw a good time, he sought king Æthelstan, and asked him to intercede with Eadgifu for the return of the deeds. And the king did so: and Eadgifu gave Goda all the deeds save that for Osterland. And that he willingly left with her, and thanked her humbly for the rest. And besides that, he, with eleven others, swore to her an oath, on behalf of those living and those yet unborn, that this dispute should be for ever settled. And this was done, in the witness of

¹ See above, p. 221.

² This change of heart on the part of king Edward was probably due to the fact that he had, in the meantime, married Eadgifu.

king Æthelstan and his 'witan' at Hamsey, near Lewes. And Eadgifu had the land and the deeds during the lifetime of the two kings, her sons [i.e. Edmund and Eadred].

Then Eadred died, and Eadgifu was deprived of all she possessed. Then the two sons of Goda, Leofstan and Leofric, took from Eadgifu these two aforesaid estates at Cooling and at Osterland; and they said to the young prince Eadwi, who had just been chosen king, that they had a juster claim to them than she. So matters stood till Edgar came into power; and he and his 'witan' ruled that Goda's sons had done wicked robbery; and they declared the property to belong to Eadgifu, and restored it to her.

Then Eadgifu, with the consent of the king and the witness of all his bishops, took the deeds and handed over the land to Christ Church. With her own hands she laid them upon the altar to belong to the Community for ever, and for the rest of her soul. And she said that Christ himself, with all the heavenly host, would curse, to all eternity, whosoever diverted or curtailed this gift. Thus did this property come to the Community at Christ Church. C

IX. MANUMISSION OF A SLAVE BY ÆTHELSTAN.

Thorpe, *Diplomatarium Anglicum*, p. 622; Birch, *Cart. Sax.*, No. 639; Harmer, 32. [In English.]

Written inside a volume of the Gospels, now in the British Museum, once the property of Christ Church, Canterbury. Such written manumissions were generally inscribed in blank spaces of Gospels or Missals. For Æthelstan as a collector of relics, see *The Times of Saint Dunstan*, by J. Armitage Robinson, 1923, Chap. III.

King Æthelstan freed Eadelm very quickly after he became king. The witnesses of this were Ælfheah the mass-priest and the community [at Christ Church], Ælfric the reeve, Wulfnoth the White, Provost Eanstan, and Byrnstan the mass-priest. He who turns this aside, may he have the wrath of God and of all the relics which, by the mercy of

God, I obtained for the English people. And I grant the same [freedom] to the children which I grant to the father.

X. FROM THE LAWS. ORDINANCE CONCERNING THE HUNDRED.

Liebermann, I, 192 : Robertson, 16, etc.

A large number of collections of English laws issued under the kings of Alfred's house is extant : two series of Edward the Elder, six of Æthelstan, three of Edmund, four of Edgar, and nine or ten of Æthelred. What follows constitutes the first series of Edgar's laws.

This is the ordinance how the hundred shall be held.

1. First, that they shall meet every four weeks, and that every man shall do justice to the other.

2. That a thief shall be pursued. If there is great need in hand, it shall be made known to the hundred-man, and he shall make it known to the tithing-men, and they shall all go forth, as God shall direct them, till they come to the thief. They shall do justice on him, as it has been ordained in Edmund's decree. And the value of the live-stock is first to be repaid to the owner of the stolen cattle,¹ and what is left [of the thief's property] (all save his men) shall be divided into two, half to the hundred and half to the thief's lord ; and the lord shall take over his men.

3. And the man who neglects this, and denies the judgment of the hundred, if it be afterwards proved against him, shall pay to the hundred, 30 pence ; and on the second occasion 60 pence, half to the hundred and half to the lord ; the third time, half a pound ; the fourth time he shall forfeit all that he owns, and be outlawed, unless the king allow him to remain in the country.

4. And we have ordained, with regard to strange cattle, that no man shall have any such, save he have the witness of the hundred-man or of the tithing-man (and even so he must be a man of thoroughly respectable character). But,

¹ That is, if the stolen cattle have been slaughtered,

without such witness, he shall not be allowed to vouch to warranty.

5. Also we have ordained, that if a hundred follow up a track into another hundred, that notice be given to the hundred-man, and that he go with them. If he neglect this, he shall pay to the king 30 shillings.

6. If anyone evade the law and escape, his supporter shall pay the damage done, and if he be accused of aiding the culprit to escape, he shall clear himself according to the custom of the district.

7. In the hundred, as in other courts, it is our will that every suit be judged in accordance with public law, and have a fixed day for decision. And he who breaks that day, save it be owing to a summons from his lord, shall pay 30 shillings, and shall fulfil at the appointed time what he ought to have done.

XI. CHARTER OF EDGAR TO ELY.

Kemble, *Cod. Dipl.* III, 56 ; Thorpe, *Diplomatarium Anglicum*, 239 ; Birch, *Cart. Sax.*, No. 1266. [In English.]

God Almighty ruling, who counsels and directs all creatures through His own wisdom ; and He governs the kingdom of all kings. I, king Edgar, am now through His grace raised up over the English people : and He has now reduced under my power Scots and Cumbrians and likewise Britons, and all that this island holds within it, that I now sit in peace upon my throne, mindful how I may exalt His praise, lest his praise, now in our time, lie too low through our sloth. But I will now through the guidance of God, everywhere in my dominions plant again the forsaken minsters with monks and nuns, and renew the praise of God which has been neglected. . . . And the monks shall live their life after the rule of S. Benedict. . . . Now it is in my mind, in accordance with the admonitions of bishop Æthelwold, who has often urged me, that I will endow, with the help of God himself, the minster in Ely. . . . The place was hallowed

from old days to the glory of S. Peter, first of the apostles ; and it was further adorned through the miracles of God Himself, which oftentimes happened at the tomb of S. Etheldreda, that holy maiden, whose body lies whole to this very day, in a tomb all of white, wrought of marble stone. . . .

XII. SCANDINAVIAN YORK AND ITS LAST KING, ERIC BLOOD-AXE.

The Scandinavians took York in 867, at which time Northumbria was engaged in its usual civil war. The two rival Northumbrian kings combined "late in the year," but were both slain in the attempt to wrest York from the Danes. Nine years later, we learn from the *Chronicle* how the Danes had partitioned out the land, and were settling down. Later still, we have a letter of an Englishman protesting against the adoption of Danish customs (see *Englische Studien*, viii., 62).

We have some account of this Scandinavian kingdom of York in a set of Northumbrian Annals, 901-966, which, like the Northumbrian *Gesta* of nearly two centuries before, are preserved, partly in 'Simeon of Durham,' and in a less complete form in MSS. D and E of the *Chronicle*.

The last of the kings to hold this uneasy throne was Eric Blood-axe, a son of Harold Fair-Hair. Eric had succeeded his father as king of Norway, but was quickly driven out, as we learn from the *Lives of the Kings of Norway* of Snorri Sturluson (1178-1241), preserved in *Heimskringla*.

Eric Blood-axe is the subject of two famous Icelandic poems. In the *Saga of Egil son of Skallagrim*, we are told how Egil, after much adventure, took service with Æthelstan, and fought for him in the battle of 'Winheath,' which may be Brunanburh, although there are chronological difficulties. Egil made a poem in honour of Æthelstan, of which the refrain is, 'Now the highest deer-forest lies subject to the valiant Æthelstan.' Egil then went to Scandinavia, and incurred a blood-feud with Eric, one of whose numerous sons he slew. After visiting Iceland, he was returning to Æthelstan, but was compelled by weather to put into the Humber, where his ship was wrecked, though the crew escaped. He then learnt that in the meantime Eric had become king of York. But Egil thought it would be undignified to be captured in flight, and he had a friend at the court of Eric, named Arinbjorn.

So he boldly presented himself before Eric, averring, in verse, that he had come voluntarily, in order to be reconciled to him. Gunnhild, Eric's wife, would have had Egil slain on the spot, but Arinbjorn gained him respite for that night, 'because night slaying is murder.' Arinbjorn took Egil home, and persuaded him to sit up all night, and compose a poem in honour of Eric. Next morning Arinbjorn armed his men, brought Egil to Eric, and pleaded for his life against Gunnhild, ending by stating that he with his men would die, if need be, in defence of Egil. Egil then recited his poem, and Eric, though grudgingly, allowed him to depart unscathed. Egil's poem, in twenty stanzas, is extant. It is known as the *Head-Ransom*, and is thus distinguished from the other *Praise of Eric*, which was written by an anonymous poet after Eric's death, by order of his wife Gunnhild, as the story goes. This anonymous poem appeals to modern taste more than does the *Head-Ransom*, which is a conventional affair. The anonymous poet has written a 'dramatic idyll' describing the reception of Eric in Valhalla. The noise of a mighty host drawing near is heard in the house of the gods, 'as if Balder were coming back to Odin's abode.' But Odin knows that it is Eric, and sends to welcome him two of the most famous warriors of ancient story. "'Welcome! What heroes attend thee?" "Five kings are here," says Eric, "I will tell their names: I myself am the sixth."'

King Eric must not be confused with a later Norwegian earl Eric, who took a leading part in the overthrow of Olaf Tryggvason at the battle of Svold (see below, p. 271) and who became a Christian, came to England, and signed charters in the days of king Cnut (see *Crawford Charters*, ed. Napier and Stevenson, 1895, pp. 142, 144 etc.)

From the *Heimskringla* of Snorri Sturluson, ed. F. Jónsson, Copenhagen, 1893-1900: *Saga of Harold Fairhair*, cap. 46; *Saga of Hakon the Good*, cap. 3.

Eric [son of king Harold] was tall and fair, strong and doughty, a man of war and victorious: violent in temper, grim, unfriendly and silent. Gunnhild his wife was the fairest of women, very wise and pleasant spoken, but treacherous and cruel. . . . [After king Eric was driven out of Norway he] first went to Orkney . . . Æthelstan, king of England, sent to Eric and offered him a kingdom under him in

England. Æthelstan said that king Harold had been a great friend of his, and he would act kindly towards his sons. Messengers passed between the kings, and it was so settled that king Eric was to hold Northumbria under king Æthelstan, and defend the land against Danes and other Vikings. Eric, with his wife, children and followers, was to be baptised. . . . Northumbria is reckoned a fifth part of England. . . . Many names of places in that part of the country are Norwegian, such as Grimsby. [The story goes on to tell how, after Æthelstan's death, Eric was driven out, and at last slain, owing to the hostility of king Edmund.]

From 'Simeon of Durham,' ed. Arnold, *Rolls Series*, II, 94, 197.

The English account makes no mention of any friendly action towards Eric on the part of Æthelstan (and, indeed, the story given in the *Heimskringla* raises chronological difficulties). 'Simeon' makes the foe who drives out Eric not Edmund, but his brother and successor Eadred.

952. The kings of Northumbria came to an end : afterwards that country was ruled by earls. . . . The last king was Eric, whom the Northumbrians made king, in violation of the faith which they had sworn to king Eadred. Wherefore that king, in wrath, gave command that all Northumbria should be laid waste. Thereupon, the Northumbrians expelled Eric their king (who was killed by Maccus son of Anlaf) and appeased king Eadred with oaths and gifts. The country was then entrusted to earl Osulf.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM THE BATTLE OF MALDON TO THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD BRIDGE (991-1066).

- I. Maldon.
- II. Treaty between Æthelred and Olaf.
- III. From the *Chronicle*, 991-1018.
- IV. Sermon of Wulfstan.
- V. The reign of Cnut, from the *Chronicle*.
- VI. Proclamation of Cnut, 1020.
- VII. Proclamation of Cnut, 1027.
- VIII. King Cnut in Church, from the *Encomium Emmae*.
- IX. King Cnut playing chess, from the *Heimskringla*.
- X. The sons of Cnut, from the *Chronicles*.
- XI. The outlawing of Godwin and his sons :
 - (a) From the *Worcester Chronicle* (D).
 - (b) From the *Canterbury Chronicle* (E).
- XII. Macbeth.
- XIII. An Earthquake.
- XIV. Welsh wars and clerical moustaches.
- XV. An Exeter Guild.
- XVI. The Thanes' Guild at Cambridge.
- XVII. The Ploughman ; from Ælfric's *Colloquy*.
- XVIII. Death of the Confessor and reign of Harold, from the *Abingdon Chronicle* (C).
- XIX. Stamford Bridge and Hastings, from the *Worcester Chronicle* (D).
- XX. Stamford Bridge, from the *Heimskringla*.

THIS period begins with the defeat of the Essex levies under Byrhtnoth at Maldon, concerning which a short epic survives. 'There is no stronger composition in English till the work of Chaucer ; there is nothing equally heroic before *Samson*

| *Agonistes*.¹ A comparison of this poem (*Extract I*) with the brief entry in the *Chronicle* should remind us how a *Chronicle*, in its simplest form, merely serves to register, in correct chronological order, events the details of which were common knowledge. Soon, however, the *Chronicle* begins to record the disasters of the country at more length and with more vigour (*Extract III*). The section from 983 to 1018 is the last great piece of historical writing which is common to several manuscripts of the *Chronicle*: it ends with the acceptance of the laws of Edgar by Englishmen and Danes alike, under Cnut. In the reign of Cnut the Great, the *Chronicle* entries become deplorably scanty.

But for the whole of this period, in which English and Scandinavian history are so closely united, we have the elaborate traditions recorded much later by Snorri Sturluson (1178-1241) in his *Lives of the kings of Norway*, preserved in *Heimskringla*. The comparison of these fuller accounts with the scanty, but contemporary, records in the *Chronicle* is an interesting study. Then there is the monk of S. Omer, who wrote the Latin 'Encomium of Emma' (see *Extract VIII*). Emma was the wife, first of Æthelred, and then of Cnut, whom she survived. We have two letters of Cnut to his subjects (*Extracts VI, VII*), and the lengthy and homiletic *Laws*, both of Æthelred and later of Cnut, which often bear a strong resemblance to the sermon of Wulfstan (*Extract IV*).

After the death of Cnut, the *Chronicle* becomes once again more detailed. Some of the entries are quite elaborate, and they continue to be our chief authority till the Battle of Hastings. We are not, however, justified in speaking of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Four manuscripts have to be reckoned with. One of these, F (*Cotton, Domitian, A. viii*) is a mere compilation, made at Canterbury not far from the year 1100, and is no more authoritative than are the Latin historians who, during the reigns of the Norman kings, were translating and paraphrasing the *Chronicles*. The

¹ W. P. Ker, *The Dark Ages*, 254.

three remaining manuscripts must rank for this period as three independent *Chronicles*, although they may, from time to time, use material which is common to two or even to all three of them.

It becomes important, then, to try and locate these *Chronicles*, for the period under consideration. (*Chronicles* passed from one scriptorium to another, and the location differs, of course, for different periods.) The narrative given in E (*Laud*, 636) shows the accumulation of a widely travelled *Chronicle*. The extant manuscript (now in the Bodleian library, the gift of Archbishop Laud) was transcribed at Peterborough about the year 1122. But the manuscript from which this Peterborough copy was made, had either itself been in many different centres, or was in its turn copied from others which had. The original manuscript must have been made in Wessex in Alfred's days. It then went to a northern monastery. Dr. Plummer has shown that, during the period we are now considering, it had come South again, and was being kept up at St. Augustine's, Canterbury.¹ How many different writers made the entries there, from about 1023 to 1067, we cannot guess, but the writer of the entry under 1048 [actually 1051] was a capable man. This *Chronicle* shows a bias in favour of Godwine, as we might expect, since the home of its compiler was in Godwine's earldom.

Accordingly, though this *Chronicle* was subsequently transcribed by a Peterborough monk, and is in its final sections (1122-54) in all respects a *Peterborough Chronicle*, it is for our period a *Canterbury Chronicle*, and will be referred to under this name.

MS. C (*Cotton, Tiberius, B. i*), belongs to *Abingdon*. The writer seems to have a bias against Godwine, though the reason for this is not very clear. 'Godwine was not regarded as unfriendly to Abingdon, while Harold appears as actively favouring the acquisition and recovery of property by the abbey.'²

¹ Plummer's *Chronicles* II, xlviii.-l.; cxxiii.

² *Ibid.*, xciii.

MS. D (*Cotton, Tiberius B. iv*) is, like E, a northern Chronicle in its earlier stages; but for the period under consideration it has usually, in virtue of certain Worcester entries, been attributed to that centre. Dr. Plummer has shown reasons for supposing that its home at this date was Evesham.¹ There are also Pershore entries. But these places are quite close to Worcester, and if we think of the county or diocese rather than the city, we may with fair safety call this the *Worcester Chronicle*. Not, however, with absolute safety. There are some puzzling Peterborough entries. But in any case the writer certainly belongs, not to Godwine's West Saxon earldom, but to a district north of it. This is clear from the words 'man bead þa folce þider ut ofer ealne þisne norðende, on Siwardes eorl dome and on Leofrices,' 'men were called up throughout all this northern quarter, in Siward's earldom [Northumbria] and in Leofric's [Mercia].'

The aldorman Æthelwerd (alluded to in *Extracts II and III*) wrote a *Chronicle* in what is alleged to be Latin. As a member of the royal house, and an important official, he might have told us much, but he is silent with regard to his own times. For the earlier centuries he is sometimes of value, as he had access to a *Chronicle* containing some information not to be found in any of our extant *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*² (see above, pp. 82 n., 175 n., 205 n.).

As a specimen of Icelandic historical writing (which for all this period is essential as a sidelight upon English history) the story of the expedition of Harald Hardrada to England is given from *Heimskringla* (*Extract XX*).

The *Heimskringla*, like *Chronicles D and E*, has a brief allusion to the battle of Hastings. But the story of the Norman Conquest has to be gathered from other sources, and does not come within the limits of this volume.

¹ II, lxxvi.

² See F. M. Stenton, 'The South-Western Element in the Old English Chronicle' in *Essays presented to T. F. Tout*, Manchester, 1925.

I. MALDON—991.

Translated by W. P. Ker (April, 1887).

[The beginning and end of the poem are lost : the words 'earl' and 'prince' refer to Byrhtnoth, son of Byrhtelm, the veteran earl or aldorman of Essex. Byrhtnoth and his followers are the only people named, or in any way individualised in the poem. The poet either does not know the names of the Danes, or will not record them. They are 'heathen,' 'rovers,' 'seamen,' 'sea-heroes.' We do not find the name even of the Danish leader, the great Olaf Tryggvason.]

. . . should be broken. Then he bade each warrior let go his horse, and send it away, and go forth, and take thought to his hands and to good heart.

When Offa's kinsman first found that the earl would stoop to no slackness, from his hands he let his good hawk fly to the wood, and strode to the battle: that so men might know that the youth would not fail in the war when he took up arms. After him Eadric chose to help his prince, his lord in the fight; and set out then to bear forward his spear to the war: he had good courage so long as he might hold in his hands shield and broad-sword; he made good his boast that he would fight before his lord. Then in the place Byrhtnoth began to rank the warriors; rode and counselled them, showed the men of war how they should stand and hold the place, prayed them to hold their shields aright, fast in their grasp, and have no fear.

When he had fairly arrayed his folk, then he alighted among his people, where it liked him best, where he knew the truest were of the company of his hearth.

Then stood on the river shore and shouted fiercely the spokesman of the rovers; he uttered his words, who brought the earl boastfully the message of the seafarers, as he stood on the bank:

'The bold seamen sent me to thee, and bade tell thee thou must send quickly rings for your safety: it is better for you to buy off with tribute this storm of spears, than that we should share the bitter war. We need not spill ourselves if ye can go

thus far : we will with the gold set up a truce. If thou decide thus, who art here the greatest, that thou wilt redeem thy people, and give the seamen at their own will a price for the peace and have a truce at our hands, we will go abroad with the tribute, and sail the sea, and be at peace with you.'

Byrhtnoth spoke and grasped his shield, brandished the slender spear and, wrathful and unwavering, gave him answer :

'Hearest thou, rover, what this people saith? They will give you in tribute spears, and deadly darts, and old swords; they will give you the war-harness that avails you naught in the battle. Seafolk's envoy, take back this word, tell thy people a crueller story: that here stands an earl not mean, with his company, who will defend this land, Æthelred's home, my prince's folk and field: the heathen shall fall in the war. Too shameful it seems to me that ye should go abroad with our tribute, unfought with, now that ye have come thus far into our land: not so lightly shall ye come by the treasure: point and edge shall first make atonement, grim warplay, before we pay tribute.'

Then he bade advance the shields, bade the warriors go till they all stood on the margin of the water. There neither band could for the water get to the other: there the flood came flowing after the ebb, the streams of the waves closed them up: too long it seemed to them till they should bring spears together. There in their array they stood beside Panta; the line of East Saxons and the crew of the ships of war: neither of them might hurt the other, save when one got death by the flight of arrow.

The flood passed out; the sailors stood ready, many rovers, eager for war. Then the protector of heroes sent to hold the bridge a warrior stern in war, Wulfstan by name, valiant along with his kin (he was son of Ceola) who pierced through the foremost man with his javelin, the man who there stepped on the bridge most boldly. There stood there along with Wulfstan warriors fearless, Ælfere and Maccus, the dauntless twain, who would not turn to flight at the ford, but guarded them stoutly against the foes, the while they could wield their arms.

When they perceived that, and saw clearly that there they had met with bitter bridge-keepers, they began to make pretence, the unlovely guests : asked leave to go up, and fare over the ford and lead their companies over. Then the earl, of his overboldness, granted ground too much to the hateful people.

Then Byrhtelm's son called over the cold water (the warriors listened), ' Now is space granted you, come speedily to us, ye men, and fight : God alone knows who may keep the place of battle.' Then the wolves of blood waded, they recked not of the water, the band of rovers, west over Panta ; carried their shields over the bright water, the sailors bore their linden shields to land. There against the foes Byrhtnoth and his men stood ready ; he called on them to make the war-hedge with their shields, on his band to hold fast against the enemies. Then was the fight near, the glory of strife, then was the time come that men should fall, whose doom was on them. Then arose a din, the ravens circled, the eagle greedy of carrion ; on earth was a cry.

From their hands they let fly the spears as hard as files,¹ the darts keen-ground : bows were busy, the shield received the point. Bitter was the onset of war : the chiefs fell on either hand, the youths were brought low. Wulfmær was wounded, and sought his bed of death, Byrhtnoth's kinsman, with the swords he was hewn down cruelly, his sister's son. There was recompense paid to the sea-rovers. I heard that Edward smote one stoutly with his sword, spared not the stroke, so that the champion fell doomed at his feet. For this his prince spoke word of thanks to him, to the minister of his house, when he found space. So the young men fierce of mood stood fast in the war, and considered eagerly each of them how first with the spear to reach the life of the doomed men, of the warriors, with their weapons : the slain fell on the earth. They stood steadfast, and Byrhtnoth marshalled them, prayed that the young men should take thought to the war, who wished to gain glory from the Danes.

¹ [Or ' sharpened by the file. ']

Then one stout in war went forward, heaving up his weapon, his shield to cover him; stepped forth to meet the chief; and the earl went unflinching against the churl: each of them wished evil to the other. The sea-hero sent a southern spear so that the lord of warriors was wounded—he gave a blow with his shield so that the shaft cracked, he broke the spear so that it sprang away. The hero of war¹ was incensed, with his dart he pierced the proud rover who had given him the wound. Cunning was the hero of the host, he let his spear wade through the fighter's neck, his hand guided it so that he reached the life of his deadly foe. Then speedily he shot another so that the mail coat gave; in his breast he was wounded through the rings, at his heart stood the deadly spear. The earl was the blither for that: he laughed, the bold-hearted man, and spoke thanks to the Creator, for the day's work that the Lord had granted to him. Then one of the crew let go a dart, flying from his hand, so that it went through the noble follower of Æthelræd. By his side stood an ungrown boy, a lad in the fight, who full quickly drew from the chief the bloody spear—the young Wulfmær, Wulfstan's son—and sent the hard weapon speeding back again: the head went in, so that the man came down, who cruelly hit the prince.

Then a man in armour stepped to the earl; he would have taken the armlets of the mighty man, his harness and his rings, and sword enchased. Then Byrhtnoth drew his sword from sheath, broad and brown-edged, and smote the mail; too quick was one of the sea-folk in staying him, in that he maimed the earl's arm: fell then to the earth the fallow-hilted sword, he could not hold the stout weapon, wield his blade. Yet he spoke a word, the grey hero of war, and cheered the young men, prayed them to go on, the good comrades. He could not longer stand fast on his feet: he looked up to heaven . . .

'I thank thee, Ruler of nations, for all the joys I have met on earth: now, gentle Creator, have I greatest need that thou shouldst grant good to my spirit, that my soul may pass to thee,

¹['Chief,' 'earl,' 'lord of warriors,' 'hero of war,' 'hero of the host,' are all synonyms for Byrthnoth.]

into thy keeping, prince of angels, and journey in peace : I am suppliant to thee that the hellish foes may not put it to shame.'

Then the heathen fellows hewed him down, and both the men who stood by him ; Ælfnoth and Wulfmær, both were brought low ; they gave up their lives by the side of their lord.

But those swerved from the war who liked not to be there.

There the son of Odda was first to flee, Godric the first to leave the combat ; he forsook that good one who had given him so many a horse aforetime. He leaped on the steed which his lord had owned, on the trappings, as was not right ; and his brothers with him both galloped, Godrinc and Godwig ; they took no heed of the war, but turned from the fray and sought the wood ; they fled to the fastness and got shelter for their lives, and more men with them than there was any seemliness, if they had borne in mind all the good works which Byrhtnoth had done for their succour. So had Offa said to him before, that day, in the place of debate, when he held a gathering ; that there many spoke in bold mood who afterwards would not endure at need.

Then was fallen the chief of the people, Æthelred's earl : all the comrades of the hearth saw how their lord lay low.

Then went forth the haughty thanes, men not craven, sped forward eagerly : they all had resolved on one of two things, either to lose their lives, or take vengeance for their dear lord.

Thus the son of Ælfric cheered them to the fight, the warrior young in years, and uttered his voice : Ælfwine said, speaking with strength, ' Remember the speeches that we often spoke at the mead, when we on the bench lifted up voice of boasting, we heroes in hall, about stern conflict. Now may it be proved who is keen in war. I will declare my race to all ; that I was, among the Mercians, of a noble house. Ealhelm was my grandfather, the wise aldorman, prospering in the world. Never among the people shall the thanes reproach me for going from this band and seeking my home, now that my chief lies hewn down in the war. That is to me the greatest of sorrows ; he was both kinsman and lord of mine.'

Then he went forth mindful of the feud, so that with his

spear he reached one of the sailors in the host, so that he fell to the earth, slain with the weapon. He called on his friends, his comrades and fellows, that they should go forth.

Offa spake and shook the ashen wood: 'Ha, Ælfwine, thou hast cheered all the thanes when need was. Now that our prince lies low, our earl on the earth, there is need for us each to embolden the other, all warriors for the war, while one may have and hold weapon, the hard blade, spear and good sword. Godric, the craven son of Odda, has betrayed us all: too many weened when they saw him riding on the horse, the proud charger, that it was our leader; so here on the field the people are divided, the shield-wall is broken. Evil end to his beginning, since he has drawn so many a man to flee.'

Leofsunu spake, and raised his linden shield in guard: he said to the man of war: 'I vow this, that I will not flee hence the space of a foot, but will go on and avenge my loved lord in the fray. Never need the steadfast men round Sturmere reproach me, now that my friend has fallen, that I journey lordless home, turn away from the war: but me shall the weapon take, the point of iron.' He strode on in wrath, and fought stoutly, and scorned to flee.

Then Dunnere spoke and shook his dart, the old carle,¹ and sent his cry over all the field, and called on every man to avenge Byrhtnoth:

'He cannot hold back, who thinks to avenge his lord in the host, caring naught for his life.'

Then they went forth and recked not of life; the comrades fought hard, the fierce spear-bearers, and prayed God that they might avenge their dear lord and work havoc among the adversaries.

Eagerly the stranger helped them: he was of a bold Northumbrian race, son of Ecglaf, and Æscferth was his name; he held not back at the warplay, but sped forth arrows enough: now he hit a shield, now he wounded a man, every instant he gave some wound, as long as he could wield his weapons.

¹ [Or, perhaps, 'a simple farmer,' not one of Byrhtnoth's retinue.]

Still Edward the long stood in the forefront, quick and eager, and spoke boastfully that he would not flee a footbreadth, or draw back while his master was lying dead : he broke the sheild-wall and fought with the warriors, till he had worthily avenged his benefactor on the seamen, before he fell among the slain.

So did Ætheric, noble comrade, active, pressing forward ; he fought earnestly, Sibyrht's brother, and many another with him, cleaving hard the round shield ; keen was the defence they made. The rim of the shield was broken, and the mail-coat sang its song of dread.

There in the battle Offa smote the sea-rover, that he fell to earth ; and there Gadd's kinsman sought the ground, suddenly was Offa hewn down in the war. Yet had he made good what he promised to his lord, when he boasted at the first to his ring-giver : that they would both ride home to the town in safety, or fall among the host and die wounded in the place of slaughter : he lay like a good servant by the side of his prince.

Then was there cracking of shields : the men of the sea went forward mad with war : the spear went through the house of life of the doomed men. Forth then went Wigstan, Thurstan's son, fought with the men : in the press he was the death of three of them, before he lay among the dead, son of Wigelin. There was a grim encounter there, fast stood the warriors in the fray, the men of battle sank weary with wounds, the dead men fell on the earth.

Oswald and Ealdwold all the while strengthened the fighters, these two brothers, and prayed their dear kinsmen to endure at need and ply their weapons unwavering.

Byrhtwold spoke, and grasped his shield—that was an old comrade—he shook his ash-spear, and gave bold counsel to the warriors :

‘Thought shall be the harder, heart the keener, mood shall be the more, as our might lessens. Here our good prince lies on the earth, hewn to death : that man will repent for ever, who now thinks to turn from this war-play. I am old in life :

away will I never, but bethink me to lie by the side of my lord, the man I cherished.'

So too did Godric son of Æthelgar embolden them all to the war: many a dart he sent, a spear of death flying among the rovers. So he among the people went out in the forefront, hewed and cut down, till he was brought low in the fray. That was not the Godric who swerved from the war. . . .

II. TREATY BETWEEN ÆTHELRED AND OLAF.

Liebermann, I, 220-1; Robertson, 56. [English.]

These are the terms of peace and the agreement which king Æthelred and all his 'witan' have made with the host led by Olaf and Josteinn and Guthmund the son of Stegita.

That is the first: that a general peace shall stand between king Æthelred and all his people and all the host to whom the king has paid money, according to the terms which archbishop Sigeric and aldorman Æthelwerd and aldorman Ælfric made, when they gained permission from the king to purchase peace for the districts which they held under the king. And if any pirate fleet harry England, we are to have the help of them all: and we are to find meat for them, while they are with us. And every land which harbours any of those who harry England shall be treated as enemy by us and by the host. . . .

If a free Englishman slay a free Dane, he shall pay for him with 25 pounds, or shall be given up. So with a Dane who slays an Englishman. If an Englishman slay a Danish thrall, he shall pay for him with one pound, and the Dane likewise for the English slave, if he slay him. If eight men are slain, that makes a breach of the peace, whether it be within a town or outside one. Up to eight men are to be paid for with the full wergeld. If a breach of the peace take place within a town, the townsmen themselves shall go and arrest the slayers, quick or dead, and the nearest kin [of the slain] shall take head for head. If the townsmen fail to do that, let the aldorman go: if he fail, let the king: if the king fail, then that earldom is to be reckoned as excluded from the terms of this peace. As for

all the slaughter, and the harryings and the harms that were wrought before this peace was made, that is to be all put away, and no man take vengeance or ask compensation for that. . . . If their men slay eight of us, the slayers shall be outlaws both with them and with us, and shall not be allowed to make compensation in money; 22,000 pounds in gold and silver have been paid from England to the [Viking] host for this peace/

III. FROM THE 'CHRONICLE,' 991-1018.

From 983 to 1018 *Chronicle* entries practically identical are found in three authoritative manuscripts: C (*Cotton, Tiberius B. i*), D (*Cotton, Tiberius B. iv*), and E (*Laud*, 636). Phrases found in one only of these MSS. are placed below within brackets. The *Parker MS.* (A) now fails us: after 975 it becomes independent of the other *Chronicles*, and meagre, whilst after 1001 it becomes almost barren.

991. Ipswich was harried: and soon after, the aldorman Bryhtnoth was slain at Maldon. And in this year it was first decided to pay tribute to the Danes, by reason of the great terror which they wrought on the sea coast. At first¹ that was 10,000 pounds. It was archbishop Sigeric who gave that counsel first.

992. . . . The king and all his 'witan' decided that all seaworthy ships should be gathered at London. And the king put in command of the army aldorman Ælfric, and earl Thorod, and bishop Ælfstan, and bishop Æsewig; they were to try if they could anywhere catch the Danes out at sea. Then aldorman Ælfric sent and warned the Danes; and then, on the night before the battle should have been, he departed from our army to his great shame. And then the Danes escaped, save that the crew of one ship was there destroyed. And then the Danes met the ships from East Anglia, and from London, and there they made a great slaughter, and took the ship of the aldorman, with all its weapons and gear. . . .

¹ See further under the year 994. The actual document (above) says 22,000 pounds. More coins of Æthelred have been found in Scandinavia than in England.

993. In this year was Bamborough stormed, and great booty taken there; and, then the Danes came to the Humber, and there wrought much damage both in Lincolnshire and Northumbria. Then a very great army was gathered against them; but when they should have met, the leaders were the first to take to flight: they were Fræna and Godwine and Frithegist. In this year the king commanded that Ælfgar, son of aldorman Ælfric, should be blinded. *children*

994. In this year Olaf and Sweyn [*Anlaf and Swegen*] marched to London, on the nativity of St. Mary [Sept. 8], with 94 ships: and they fought fiercely against the town, and would have set it on fire. But there they suffered more harm and evil than they ever weened that any townsmen could do to them. For the holy Mother of God on that day showed her mercy to the men of London, and delivered them from their foes. So the Danes left London, and wrought the greatest evil that any plundering army could ever do, in burning and harrying and slaughter, on the sea coast, alike in Essex and Kent and Sussex and Hampshire, and at last they got horses and rode whithersoever they would, doing evil unspeakable. Then the king and his 'witan' decreed that messengers should be sent to them promising tribute and rations, if they would cease from plundering: and they agreed to that.

Then all the Danes came to Southampton, and there took up their winter quarters; and they were fed from the whole kingdom of Wessex, and they were paid 16,000 pounds. Then the king sent bishop Ælfeah, and aldorman Æthelward to king Olaf; and Olaf was brought with great honour to the king at Andover, and hostages were sent to the [Danish] ships meantime. And king Æthelred stood sponsor to king Olaf at his confirmation, and gave him royal gifts. And Olaf promised the king, that never again would he come to England as an enemy. And he kept his promise.

997. In this year the Danes went round about Devonshire, to the mouth of the Severn; and there they harried both in Cornwall and in Wales and in Devonshire; and then they came to land at Watchet, and there they wrought great evil, burning and

slaying. And after that they went south about Lands End, and up the mouth of the Tamar and on to Lydford, burning and slaying all that they met. And they burnt Ordulf's minster at Tavistock, and carried booty uncountable with them to their ships.

998. The Danes went east to the mouth of the Frome, and everywhere, as far as they would, into Dorsetshire. And an army was often gathered against them, but as soon as they should have come together, then, for some reason, flight was always decreed; and ever in the end the Danes had the victory. And then at other times they quartered themselves in Wight, and provisioned themselves from Hampshire and Sussex.

999. The Danes came round into the Thames, and up along the Medway to Rochester. And the Kentish force came against them, and they fought sharply. But alas that they all too quickly gave way and fled (because they had not the support that they should have had).¹ And the Danes held the field; and then took horses and rode whithersoever they would, and ruined almost all West Kent. Then the king with his 'witan' decreed that they should be met both by a navy and a land-force. But when the ships were ready there was delay from day to day, and the wretched crews in the ships were harassed; and ever, as things ought to have been more forward, they were from one hour to another more behindhand. And ever they let the host of their foes increase; and ever the English withdrew from the sea, and the Danes followed them up. And then, in the end, neither the navy nor the land force came to anything, save toil of the people, and waste of money, and encouragement of the enemy.

[The conversion of Olaf to Christianity had been sincere; the heathen foe of the battle of Maldon became the champion of Christianity, and his defeat by Sweyn of Denmark, at Svold, in the Baltic, in the year 1000, left England more than ever exposed to

¹ This excuse for the Kentish men is found only in *Chronicle E*, and may well have been added during the time that *Chronicle* was kept at Canterbury.

the attacks of the victorious heathen. The battle of Svold is therefore an event of great importance to English history : Olaf with only eleven ships was surprised by Sweyn king of Denmark, Olaf king of Sweden, and his Norwegian rival, Earl Eric. The story is told in the *Heimskringla*. Olaf refused to flee : ' My men must not think of flight : it must be with my life as God will.' Finally, to avoid capture, Olaf jumped overboard. The Norwegians were unwilling to believe him dead, and told many tales of his wanderings. ' But however that may have been, king Olaf came never again to his kingdom in Norway.' From 1000-1010 the English *Chronicle* continues in the same melancholy strain, telling of the woes of England as the attacks of Sweyn increased.]

1011. In this year the king and his 'witan' sent to the Danes, and asked for peace, and offered them tribute and rations if they would cease from their plundering. . . . All these calamities fell upon us through evil counsel, because tribute was not offered to them at the right time, not yet were they resisted : but, when they had done the most evil, then was peace made with them. And notwithstanding all this peace and tribute, they went everywhere in companies, harried our wretched people, robbed and slew them.

And then in this year, between the Nativity of S. Mary [Sept. 8] and Michaelmas [Sept. 29] they besieged Canterbury. And they got in through treason, for Ælfræd, whose life the archbishop Ælfræd had once saved, betrayed the town. And the Danes took the archbishop Ælfræd, and Ælfræd the king's reeve, and the abbess Leofrun and bishop Godwine. And abbot Ælfræd they allowed to go free. And they took there within all the men in orders, and men and women, no one can say how many. And they stayed in the town as long as they wished. And when they had searched it, they went to their ships, and led the archbishop with them :

Then was he captive . who had been the head
Of the English race . and of Christendom.
There was misery to be seen . where bliss had been before
In that unhappy city . whence came to us first
Christendom and happiness . in the sight of God and man.

And they had the bishop with them, up to the time when they martyred him,

1012. In this year came the aldorman Eadric, and all the highest 'witan,' whether clerical or lay, of England, to London before Easter. . . . And they remained till all the tribute was paid, after Easter; that was 48,000 pounds. Then, on the Saturday, the Danes were very greatly excited against archbishop Ælfeah, because he would not promise them any money, but forbade that any ransom should be paid for him. They were also very drunken, because wine had been brought thither from the South. Then they took the bishop, and led him to their 'husting' on the Sunday eve, the octave of Easter, that was the 13th of the Kalends of May;¹ and there they did him to death in shameful wise; they pelted him with bones and with the heads of oxen; and one of them struck him on the head with an axe-iron, so that with the dint he sank down, and his holy blood fell on the earth, and he sent forth his holy soul to the kingdom of God. And on the morrow the body was borne to London, and the bishops Eadnoth and Ælfhun and the men of London received it with all honour, and buried it in St. Paul's minster. And there now God makes manifest the mighty deeds of the holy martyr.²

When the tribute was paid, and the peace-oaths sworn, then the Danes scattered as widely as they had before been gathered together. Then 45 ships from the Danish host submitted to the king, and promised him that they would defend this country: and he was to feed and to clothe them.

1013. . . . Before the month of August, king Sweyn came with his fleet to Sandwich, and then went quickly round about East Anglia to the Humber, and so up the Trent till he came to Gainsborough. And then earl Uhtred and all the Northumbrians forthwith submitted to him, and all the people in Lincolnshire, and then the people of the Five Burghs; and soon after that, all the Danes north of Watling Street. And hostages were given to him for every shire. When he knew

¹ I.e. April 19th, which is kept as the anniversary of the martyrdom of Ælfeah—the S. Alphege of the English Calendar.

² This was therefore written before 1023, when the body of the archbishop was removed from St. Paul's to Canterbury. See below, *Extract V.* P. 280

that they had all submitted to him, he demanded rations and horses for his army. Then he marched with all his host southward and entrusted the ships and the hostages to his son Cnut. And as soon as he had crossed Watling Street, his army wrought the greatest evil that any ravagers could do. Then he went to Oxford, and the town submitted and gave hostages: thence to Winchester, and they did the same.¶ Then they turned eastward to London. And many of his army were drowned in the Thames, because they crossed without any bridge. When he came to London, the town would not submit, but they withstood him with full warfare. For king Æthelred was in the town, and Thurkil with him.¶ Then king Sweyn went thence to Wallingford, and so over the Thames, westward, to Bath, and sat there with his force. Then Æthelmær the aldorman [of Devon] came thither, and the western thanes with him, and they all submitted to Sweyn, and gave him hostages. Then he went northward to his ships, and all the people held him for full king. ¶ After that the townsmen in London submitted and gave hostages, because they dreaded that he would destroy them. Sweyn then commanded payment and rations for his army during the winter; and Thurkil¹ commanded the same for the army which lay at Greenwich; and for all that, they harried as often as they wished. Then nothing profited this people, neither from the South nor from the North. Then for sometime king Æthelred remained with the fleet which lay in the Thames; and the lady [his wife Ælfgifu-Emma] went oversea to her brother Richard,² and Ælfsige, abbot of Peterborough, with her. And king Æthelred sent bishop Ælfhun with the æthelings Edward and Alfred oversea, that he might take charge of them. And the king left the fleet at midwinter, and went to Wight, and was there during that tide. And afterwards he went oversea to Richard,

¹ A Runic inscription in Sweden reads: 'Ulf has three times taken payment in England. The first time Tosti paid him, then Thurkil, then Cnut.' See Von Friesen, *Historiska Runinskrifter in Fornvännien*, 1909, 58.

² Richard II (the Good), duke of Normandy.

and was there with him until the time when Sweyn was dead.

[The annals 1014-16 deal with the struggle, after the death of Sweyn, of his son Cnut with Æthelred and Æthelred's son, Edmund.]

1016. . . . Then it came to pass that king Æthelred died . . . on S. George's day [April 23], after great toil and distress during all his life. Then all the 'witan' who were in London, and the townsmen, chose Edmund king, and valiantly did he defend his kingdom, while his time lasted. Then came the ships to Greenwich in Rogation tide, and within a little space they went to London, and dug a great ditch on the south side, and dragged their ships to the west of the bridge.¹ Then they made a ditch all round the town, so that no man could come in or go out. And they attacked the town often, but the townsmen withstood them stoutly. Before this, king Edmund had left London, and ridden through Wessex. All the people joined him, and soon he fought the Danes at Pen by Gillingham. A second battle he fought after midsummer at Sherston, and the armies separated after great slaughter on both sides. In that fight aldorman Eadric and Ælmaer Dyrling were helping the Danes against Edmund. Then a third time Edmund mustered his army, marched on London, rescued it, and drove the Danes in flight to their ships. Two nights after, the king crossed at Brentford, fought the Danes and routed them: but there many of the English army were drowned by their own recklessness, those who went in front of the rest, seeking booty. After that, the king went to Wessex, and mustered his host. Then the Danes returned to the siege of London, and attacked it both by water and land. But Almighty God saved the town. Then the Danes left London, and sailed to Orwell [Suffolk] and there landed, and went into Mercia, slaying and burning everywhere, as their custom is. They provided themselves with food, and sent both their ships and their droves to the Medway. Then a fourth time did Edmund assemble all the English

¹ The Danes thus avoided the barrier which the armed bridge constituted.

nation, crossed the Thames at Brentford, and marched into Kent. And the Danes, with their horses, fled before him to Sheppey : and the king slew as many of them as he could cut off.

Then aldorman Eadric made his submission to king Edmund at Aylesford, and king Edmund accepted it—never was greater folly than that. The Danes returned to Essex and overran Mercia, destroying everything. And when king Edmund learnt that the Danes were ‘ up,’ he for the fifth time mustered all the English nation : followed, overtook and fought them in Essex, at the hill called Ashingdon. Then did aldorman Eadric as he had often done before : he began the flight, with the men from the Welsh border, and so betrayed his king and lord and the whole English nation. And Cnut won the victory, and with it all England. There were slain bishop Eadnoth, and abbot Wulfsig, and aldorman Ælfric, and aldorman Godwine, and Ulfcytel of East Anglia, and Æthelward son of aldorman Ælfwine, and all the chivalry of England.

After this fight Cnut went with his army to Gloucestershire, where he learned that king Edmund was. Then aldorman Eadric and the ‘ witan ’ who were there advised that the kings should come to terms. Then the kings met at Olney near Deerhurst, and made firm friendship with pledge and oath, and fixed the payments to be made to the Danes. Then they parted on these terms : Edmund to be king of Wessex, Cnut of Mercia (and the north). || The Danes returned to their ships with their booty, and the Londoners bought peace from them : the Danes brought their ships into London and took up winter quarters there.||

Then on S. Andrew’s day (Nov. 30) king Edmund died, and his body lies at Glastonbury, with his grandfather Edgar. . . .

1017. In this year Cnut succeeded to all the kingdom of England. . . . And in this year aldorman Eadric was slain (in London, very rightly).¹ . . . And then, before the Kalends

¹ These words occur only in MS. F. But they are confirmed by a passage in the Chartulary of Heming ; ‘ Eadric, called Streona, that is “ the Grasper ” was slain by order of Cnut, and his body was thrown beyond the wall of London, as unworthy of sepulture ’ (ed. Hearne, 281).

of August, the king bade fetch him the widow of the late king Æthelred to wife, Richard's daughter (the same is Ælfgifu in English, Emma in French).¹

|| 1018. In this year the tribute was paid all over England : that was in all 72,000 pounds, besides what the Londoners paid, 10,500 pounds. And some of the Danes then went to Denmark, and 40 ships remained with king Cnut.

And the Danes and English agreed at Oxford (to abide by Edgar's law).²

IV. SERMON OF WULFSTAN.

Wulfstan was archbishop of York, 1002-23. His sermons have been edited by Napier. (Berlin, 1883.) They are, like those of Ælfric, in English.

Beloved, know the truth : this world draweth nigh in haste to the end ; and ever the longer, so much the worse it is, and so must it needs grow greatly evil before the coming of Anti-christ : and, verily, then it will be dread and grim far and wide in the world.

And understand well also that the devil has now for many years deceived this people all too much, and that little faith has there been among men, albeit they have spoken fair. . . .

Among heathen peoples no one dare withhold ought, either great or small, which is ordained to the honour of their false gods ; and we everywhere withhold God's dues all too frequently. And among heathen peoples no one dare curtail, within or without, any of the things which are brought and offered to their false gods : and we have stripped the houses of God, within and without, of all their rights. And also God's servants are everywhere deprived of honour and due reverence : and some men say, that among heathen peoples no one dares in any wise to treat unjustly the servants of their false gods, as now all too far and wide the servants of God are treated, where Christian men are bound to observe the laws of God and protect his servants.

But truth is it that I say, that there is need of amendment,

¹ These words in F only.

² These words in D only.

because God's dues have been curtailed too long in every corner of this land, and the public laws have declined all too much since the death of Edgar; and too little respect has been paid to sanctuaries, and God's houses have been too utterly robbed of ancient rights and stripped of all dues; and the spiritual orders have been now too long utterly despised; and far and wide widows have been unrighteously compelled to marry, and too many have been brought to poverty and shame, and poor men are sorely deceived, and cruelly betrayed, and innocent men have been sold out of this land into the power of strangers, and small children for a little theft often in this land have been sold into slavery through cruel and wicked laws; and the right of the freeman has been destroyed and the right of the thrall impaired, and alms-right diminished. Freemen may not be their own masters, nor go where they will, nor do with their own what they will; and thralls may not have what they own, earned with their labour in their own time, nor what for the grace of God good men have granted to them, and have given as alms for the love of God. But every alms-duty, which for the grace of God men are in right bound willingly to pay, every man diminishes and holds back. Therefore is unrighteousness too common among men, and evil laws beloved, and to say it most shortly, God's laws are hated and his teachings despised. And therefore we have all, through the anger of God, disgrace oftentimes, let him understand who can, and the injury is common (although men ween it not) unto all this people, unless God shape some remedy.

For it is clear and manifest against us all that we have transgressed more often than we have amended: and therefore are many things impending over this people. For long there has been nothing well with it, within or without: but there has been ravaging and famine, burning and shedding of blood, on every side oft and again: robbery and slaughter, sedition and pestilence, murrain and disease, slander and hatred and plunder by riflers have mightily tormented us. Evil taxes have sore oppressed us, and bad seasons have too often brought about dearth. . . .

For there are in this land great treasons in the sight of God and man, and here in this country there are many traitors of many kinds. The greatest treason of all in the world, is that a man should betray his lord's soul; and a full mighty treason is it that a man should betray his lord's life, or drive him living from his land. And within this country have both taken place. Edward was betrayed, and then killed, and then burnt,¹ and Æthelred was driven from his land. And far and wide among this people have men destroyed their own godchildren and their own god-kin, besides all too many others who have been destroyed guiltless. . . . Father has sold his child for money, and son his mother, and brother has sold brother out of the kingdom into the hands of strangers: and all these are deeds great and terrible, let him who will understand. And yet the guilt which besets this nation is greater and more manifold. Many are forsworn and perjured: over and over are pledges broken; and manifest is it that the anger of God assails us cruelly, let him who can know it.

And lo! how can greater shame, through the anger of God, happen unto men than doth oftentimes unto us for our own deserts? If a thrall runs away from his lord, leaves Christendom and becomes a Viking, and afterwards it happens that the runaway thrall and his master fight: if the thrall slays the thane, there is no compensation to be paid to any of the thane's kindred; but if the thane slay the thrall who was once his own, he must pay for him the price of a thane. Base laws and shameful exactions through the wrath of God are common among us, let him understand who can, and many misfortunes happen to this people again and again. For a long time has there been no soundness in it, within or without, but there has been ravaging and enmity from end to end. The English have long been deprived of victory, made cowards by the wrath of God; and God has suffered the pirates to grow so strong, that often in fight one puts ten to flight, sometimes less, sometimes more,

¹ It is not clear what Wulfstan means by saying that the body of Edward the martyr was burnt. It is not consistent with the account either of the *Chronicle* or of the *Life of S. Oswald* (see above, pp. 242, 248).

all for our sins. . . . And often does the thrall bind fast the thane who was of old his lord, and makes him a thrall, through the wrath of God. Woe for the poverty, and woe for the public shame, which the English now have, through the wrath of God! Often do two shipmen, or sometimes three, drive a drove of Christian men from sea to sea through this country, bound together—a public shame to all of us, if we verily were capable of shame, or could at all rightly understand. But all the shame which we constantly suffer, we repay with honour to those who shame us; we perpetually pay them, and they daily shame us. They harry and burn, plunder and rob, and carry captive to their ships: and what else is this save the wrath of God, clear and manifest upon our people? . . .

There was in the days of the Britons a wise man, Gildas by name, who wrote concerning their misdeeds, how they by their sins had so exceedingly angered God, that at last He suffered the army of the English to win their land, and the knighthood of the Britons to be utterly destroyed. And all that happened, as he said, because clerks would not keep their rule, nor laymen the law, because great men plundered, and avariciously desired unjust wealth; it happened through unjust laws and wrongful judgments among the people, through the sloth and folly of bishops and the wicked cowardice of the servants of God, who all too often were silent concerning the truth, and mumbled with their jaws when they ought to have proclaimed aloud; it happened also through the foul wantonness of the people and their gluttony and manifold sins, that they brought destruction on their land and themselves.

But let us do as need is, and take warning by this; and true it is that I say, we know of some worse deeds among the English than ever we heard of among the Britons, and therefore is there much need that we should bethink ourselves, and make our peace with God himself. Let us do as need is, and turn to justice and leave unrighteousness, and eagerly amend what we have transgressed. Let us creep unto Christ, and with trembling heart let us often call upon Him, and earn His mercy: let us love God and follow His laws, and eagerly

perform what we promised when we received baptism, or what those promised who were our sponsors at baptism. Let us order aright our words and our works, and cleanse our inmost thoughts, and carefully observe our oaths and pledges, and have some measure of truth among ourselves, without evil practices; and let us often consider the great judgment to which we all must go, and earnestly save ourselves from the boiling torment of Hell, and earn the glory and the joy which God has prepared for those who do His will on earth. May God help us. Amen.

V. THE REIGN OF CNUT.

From *Chronicle D* (*Cotton, Tiberius B. iv*). Words in brackets are from other *Chronicles*.

1019. King Cnut went to Denmark with 9 ships, and was there all the winter. . . .

1020. King Cnut returned to England. . . .

1023. King Cnut, within London, in S. Paul's, gave full leave to archbishop Æthelnoth and bishop Bryhtwine and to all God's servants who were with them, to take up from the tomb the body of archbishop S. Ælfheah. And they did so, on the 6th of the Ides of June. And the glorious king, and the archbishop, and the bishops, and earls, and a great multitude, clerics and laymen, carried on ship his holy body over the Thames to Southwark, and there delivered the holy martyr to the archbishop, and his companions. . . .

1028. King Cnut went from England, with 50 ships (of English thanes) to Norway, and drove out king Olaf,¹ from the land, and possessed himself of all that land.

1029. King Cnut came home again to England.

1030. King Olaf returned again to Norway, and the people gathered together, fought with him, and slew him.

1031. King Cnut went to Rome, and as soon as he came home, he went to Scotland. And the king of Scots (Malcolm) submitted to him, and became his man. But he kept to it but a short time. . . .

¹ I.e. Saint Olaf.

VI. PROCLAMATION OF CNUT, 1020.

In English. See Liebermann, I, 273-5 : Robertson, 140-5.

Cnut the king greeteth in friendly wise his archbishops and bishops, and earl Thurkil, and all his earls, and subjects noble and common,¹ in England. And I make known unto you that I will be your gracious lord, faithful to the rights of God and just public law. I have taken to heart the writings and the words that archbishop Lyfing [of Canterbury] brought to me from Rome from the Pope; that I should everywhere raise up the glory of God, and put down injustice, and make perfect peace by the power given me by God. Of late I did not grudge my money, when warfare was threatening you : and now by the help of God, I have averted it by my money. Then it was made known to me, that danger, more than I well liked, threatened us ; then I went myself, with the men who served with me, to Denmark, whence the greatest danger threatened you. And with God's help I have taken such precautions, that never from henceforth shall warfare threaten you from thence, so long as you hold loyally to me, and my life lasts. Now I thank God Almighty for His help and His mercy. . . . If anyone . . . Dane or English . . . defy the law, I pray and command earl Thurkil to bring him to justice. . . . Likewise I command all my reeves, by my friendship, by all that they possess, and by their own lives, that they govern my people justly everywhere, and pronounce just judgments by the witness of the bishops, and show such mercy as the bishop may think fit, and the man be able to bear. And if anyone protect or support a thief, he is to me as guilty as the thief himself, unless he can fully clear himself. And I will that all the nation, clerical or lay, hold fast to Edgar's law, which all men chose and swore to at Oxford. 1018

¹ Literally, those with wergelds of 1200 shillings (= noble), and 200 shillings (= common).

VII. PROCLAMATION OF CNUT, 1027.

Liebermann, I, 276-7 : Robertson, 146-53.

Cnut, king of all England, and Denmark, and Norway, and part of Sweden, to Æthelnoth the metropolitan, and to Ælfrie, archbishop of York, and to all the bishops and magnates, and to all the English nation, nobles and commons, greeting.

I make known to you that I have lately been to Rome, to pray for the remission of my sins, and for the safety of the realms and peoples subject to me. Long ago I vowed this pilgrimage to God, but on account of the business of my kingdom, and other delays, till now I had not been able to perform it. . . . My chief reason for making this pilgrimage was, that I learned from the wise that the apostle, S. Peter, had received from the Lord great power both of binding and loosing, and is the key-bearer of the heavenly kingdom. For this reason I thought it exceedingly useful diligently to seek, in particular, his favour before God.

Be it known unto you, that there was at Easter a great congregation of nobles, with my lord the Pope John and the Emperor Conrad, namely all the rulers of the nations from Mount Garganus unto the sea which is nearest to us. They all received me honourably, and distinguished me with precious gifts: but chiefly was I honoured by the Emperor with various gifts and presents, with vessels of gold and silver, and mantles and very precious vestments.

I therefore spoke with the Emperor himself, and with my lord the Pope, and with the rulers who were there, about the needs of all the people of my whole realm, English and Danes, that more just law and more secure peace should be granted to them on their way to Rome, and that they should not be hampered by so many barriers on their way, or fatigued by unjust tolls. And the Emperor agreed to my request, and king Rudolf likewise, who is lord of most of the said barriers. And all the princes confirmed by edicts that all my men, whether merchants, or others travelling for the sake of religion, should go to Rome and return therefrom, in firm peace, and

just and secure law, without any impediment from barriers and tolls.

And I complained again in the presence of my lord the Pope, and said that it displeased me greatly that my archbishops were so straitened by the vast sums of money sought from them, when, according to custom, they visited the Apostolic See to receive the pallium. And it was decreed that it should be so no more. . . .

And so let it now be known unto you all, that as a suppliant I have vowed unto God Almighty from this time forth to regulate my life in all things, to rule my realms and people in justice, and to observe equity in all things, and if anything, through the intemperance of my youth or negligence has up to now been done contrary to justice, I purpose to amend it all, henceforward, with the help of God. . . .

And so I wish to make known to you that, returning by the same way, I am going to Denmark to make peace and a firm pact, by the counsel of all the Danes, with those nations and people who, had they been able, would have deprived us both of kingdom and life. . . . Then, when peace has been made with the nations round about, and all our kingdom here in the east has been regulated and pacified, so that we have no war or hostility to fear from any quarter, I propose to come to England this summer, as soon as I can get together shipping. But I have sent this letter before me, that all the people of my kingdom may rejoice in my prosperity, because, as ye know, I have never spared myself or my labour for the welfare of all my people, nor will I in the future spare. . . .

VIII. KING CNUT IN CHURCH.

From the *Encomium Emmae*, in Langebek, *Scriptores rerum Danicarum*, II., p. 494 (1773).

When he entered monasteries, and was received with great honour, he proceeded humbly; keeping his eyes fixed with a wonderful reverence on the ground, and shedding tears copiously—nay, I may say, in rivers—he devoutly sought the

intervention of the Saints. But when it came to making his royal oblations, oh! how often did he fix his weeping eyes upon the earth! How often did he beat that noble breast! What sighs he gave! How often he prayed that he might not be unworthy of clemency from on high! . . . With his own hands the king placed his gift upon the altar. But why do I say 'the altar'? I remember to have seen him go round every corner, passing by *no* altar, however small, without gifts and kisses. . . . These things, and others more wonderful, have I myself seen done by king Cnut, in our own monastery, I, an inmate of S. Bertin at S. Omer, where canons and monks pray for him with daily prayers.

IX. KING CNUT PLAYING CHESS.

From the *Heimskringla* of Snorri Sturluson, ed. F. Jónsson, Copenhagen, 1893-1900: *Saga of Olaf Haraldsson the Saint*, cap. 153.

This is the tradition of some two centuries after the event, not, like the preceding extract, the words of an eye-witness. The translation is that of Samuel Laing, revised.

When they [king Cnut and earl Ulf] had played a while the king made a false move, at which the earl took a knight from the king; but the king set the piece again upon the board, and told the earl to make another move; but the earl grew angry, threw over the chess-board, stood up, and went away. The king said, 'Run away, Ulf the Fearful.' The earl turned round at the door and said, '. . . Thou didst not call me Ulf the Fearful at Helge river, when I hastened to thy help while the Swedes were beating thee like a dog.' The earl then went out, and went to bed. . . . The morning after, while the king was putting on his clothes, he said to his footboy, 'Go thou to Earl Ulf, and kill him.'

The lad went, was away a while, and then came back.

The king said, 'Hast thou killed the earl?'

'I did not kill him, for he was gone to Saint Lucius' church.'

There was a man called Ivar White, a Norwegian by birth,

who was the king's courtman and chamberlain. The king said to him, 'Go thou and kill the earl.'

Ivar went to the church, and in at the choir, and thrust his sword through the earl, who died on the spot. Then Ivar went to the king, with the bloody sword in his hand.

The king said, 'Hast thou killed the earl?'

'I have killed him,' says he.

'Thou didst well.'

After the earl was killed, the monks closed the church, and locked the doors. When that was told the king, he sent a message to the monks, ordering them to open the church and sing high mass. They did as the king ordered; and when the king came to the church he bestowed on it great property, so that it had a large domain, by which that place was raised very high; and those lands have since always belonged to it.

X. THE SONS OF CNUT.

On the death of Cnut, the earls north of the Thames supported Harold Harefoot (the illegitimate son of Cnut by an English mother, Ælfifu of Northampton). They claimed for him, if not the crown, at any rate the regency, till a settlement could be made between him and his legitimate brother Harthacnut. Godwine, earl of Wessex, claimed the crown for Harthacnut, as did his mother Ælfifu (otherwise Emma).

Before her marriage with Cnut, Ælfifu-Emma had had two sons by her first husband Æthelred the Unready: Alfred and Edward (afterwards Edward the Confessor). Alfred now came to England, to visit his mother. Godwine's difficulties were great, for, as Harthacnut remained in Denmark, 'the voice went all for Harold,' and the arrival of another son of Emma, who might also have claims to the throne, must have added to these difficulties. Godwine was suspected of having betrayed Alfred to captivity and death. The *Historia Emmae* makes Harold Harefoot responsible for the outrage, and this was certainly committed at Ely, beyond Godwine's sphere of influence. The *Abingdon Chronicle* (C), always hostile to Godwine, makes Godwine responsible; the *Worcester Chronicle* (D) alters the wording so as to place the responsibility upon 'the rulers' generally; the *Canterbury Chronicle* (E), which favours Godwine, is strangely silent about the whole matter.

Harthacnut had no responsibility for the outrage, and subsequently, albeit he 'did nothing kingly,' he welcomed his half-brother Edward, and associated him in his government.

From the *Canterbury Chronicle* (E).

1035.¹ In this year king Cnut died at Shaftesbury, and he is buried at Winchester in the Old Minster: and he was king over all England wellnigh twenty winters. And soon after his death was a meeting of all the 'witan' at Oxford. And earl Leofric, and almost all the thanes north of the Thames, and the men of the fleet of London, chose Harold to be protector of all England, for himself and his brother Hardacnut, who was in Denmark. And earl Godwine and all the chief men in Wessex opposed this as long as they could, but they could contrive nothing against it. And it was resolved that Ælfifu, Hardacnut's mother, should dwell in Winchester, with the house-carls of the king her son, and hold all Wessex on his behalf. And earl Godwine was their most devoted man.

From the *Abingdon Chronicle* (C).

1036. In this year came hither Alfred the innocent prince, son of king Æthelred, and wished to visit his mother, who dwelt in Winchester. But earl Godwine would not allow it to him, nor the other men of great power, because the voice was all for Harold, though it was not just.

But Godwine stopped him . and made him captive,
His comrades he scattered . some he killed in diverse wise.

Some they sold for money . some they miserably slew,

Some they laid in bonds . and some they blinded,

Some they mutilated . some they scalped.

No bloodier deed . was done in this land

Since the Danes came . and settled here. . . .

The atheling lived yet . every evil they vowed him.

Till counsel was given . that he should be led

To Ely town . bound as he was.

When he came to land . on the ship they blinded him

And so blinded . brought to the monks,

¹ Wrongly written as 1036.

And there he abode . so long as he lived,
 Then was he buried . as well beseemed him,
 That was full worthily . as he worthy was,
 At the west end . near to the steeple,
 In the south porch . His soul is with Christ.

The above entry also occurs in the *Worcester Chronicle* (D): but in place of 'Godwine would not allow it him' that chronicle reads 'those who ruled in this land would not allow it him.' D also removes Godwine's name from the verse: but the metre proves that the version in *Abingdon* (C), which makes him responsible, is the original.

Abingdon Chronicle (C) and *Worcester Chronicle* (D).

1037. In this year they chose Harold to be king everywhere, and forsook Harthacnut, because he was too long in Denmark. And they drove out his mother Ælfgifu the queen, without any mercy, against the stormy winter. And she came to Bruges, and earl Baldwin received her well there, and gave her protection there so long as she had need.

From the *Abingdon Chronicle* (C) and *Worcester Chronicle* (D).

1040. In this year died king Harold. Then they sent after Harthacnut to Bruges, and thought it well done. And he then came hither before midsummer with sixty ships. And he imposed a mighty tax, so that it could with difficulty be borne: that was eight marks for each rower. Then were those unfriendly who before had desired him. And he also did naught that was kingly whilst he reigned. He had the dead Harold dragged up, and cast into a marsh.

From the *Canterbury Chronicle* (E).

[1040].¹ In this year king Harold died at Oxford . . . and he was buried at Westminster. . . . And in this same year came king Hardacnut to Sandwich seven nights before midsummer: and he was soon received, both by the English and the Danes, albeit his counsellors afterwards requited it cruelly. For they resolved that there should be paid for the sixty-two

¹ Wrongly given as 1039.

ships, eight marks for each rower. And this same year a horse-load of wheat went to fifty-five pence and further.

From the *Abingdon Chronicle* (C) and *Worcester Chronicle* (D).

1041. This year Edward, Harthacnut's brother on his mother's side, and son of king Æthelred, came from beyond the sea; he who had been for many years driven from his land; and yet he was sworn king, and he so dwelt in his brother's court while he lived.

1042. In this year died Harthacnut as he stood at his drink. He fell suddenly to the earth with a terrible struggle; and they who were nigh took hold of him, but he never spake word more. . . . And all the people then received Edward as king, as was his right.

From the *Canterbury Chronicle* (E).

[1042].¹ In this year king Hardacnut died at Lambeth. . . . And before he was buried all the people chose Edward king in London: may he hold it while God shall grant it him!

XI. THE OUTLAWING OF GODWINE AND HIS SONS.

The *Abingdon Chronicle* (C) merely notes the event without details, though it gives a full account of the circumstances under which Godwine and Harold were subsequently re-instated. From this silence of *Abingdon* as to details, it has been argued that these cannot have been very discreditable to Godwine. The *Worcester Chronicle* (D) gives the version hostile to Godwine current in the Midlands and North. The *Canterbury Chronicle* (E) is favourable to Godwine; and it can fairly be claimed that its writer had the best opportunity of getting accurate local information of the origin of the breil.

(a) From the *Worcester Chronicle* (D).

[1051].² . . . In that same year Eustace landed at Dover, he who had king Edward's sister to wife. Then his men went foolishly after quarters, and they slew a man of the town, and another man of the town slew their comrade, so that

¹ Wrongly given as 1041.

² Given under 1052 in D, 1048 in E.

there lay dead seven of his men. And great harm was there done on either side, with horse and with weapons also, until the people gathered. Then they [Eustace and his men] fled away till they came to the king at Gloucester, and he gave them protection. Then earl Godwine took it hard, that in his earldom such a thing should happen, and he began to gather folk throughout all his earldom. Earl Swegen did the same throughout his earldom, and Harold, his second son, throughout his. And they all gathered in Gloucestershire at Longtree a great army, without number, all ready for war against the king, unless Eustace were given up, and his men given into their hands, and also the Frenchmen who were in the castle. This was done seven nights before the later St. Mary's Mass [the Nativity, Sept. 8], king Edward was then abiding in Gloucester. He sent then after Leofric earl, and north after Siward earl, and asked for their retinue. And they then came to him, first with a small force; but when they knew how matters were in the south, then they sent north over all their earldom, and caused a great army to be called out, to the help of their lord; and Ralph also throughout his earldom. And then they all came to Gloucester to the king to help him, late though it was. And so much were they of one mind with the king, that they would have attacked the army of Godwine, if the king had wished it. But some men thought that it would be great folly, were they to come together in battle, because all that was most gallant in England was in one or other of the two hosts. Such men thought that they would be making an open way to our enemies into the land, and be bringing to pass great destruction among ourselves. Then it was resolved that hostages should be given on either side, and a meeting fixed away in London. And thither people were ordered out, throughout all this northern part, in Siward's earldom, and Leofric's, and everywhere else too. And Godwine earl, and his sons, were to come there with their defence. Then came they to Southwark, and a great company from Wessex with them. But Godwine's company ever decreased, the longer the more; and all the

thanes of Harold earl, his son, were transferred to the protection of the king ; and Swegen earl, his other son, was outlawed. Then it pleased not earl Godwine to appear in his own defence before the king and the army that was with the king. Then Godwine stole away by night. Then, on the morrow, the king held a meeting of the 'witan,' and the king proclaimed earl Godwine outlaw, and so did all the army, him and all his sons. Godwine went south to Thorney [off the coast of Hampshire] and his wife, and Swegen his son, and Tostig, and his wife who was a kinswoman of Baldwin at Bruges, and Gyrth his son. And Harold earl, and Leofwine, went to Bristol, in the ship that earl Swegen had before prepared and provisioned for himself. And the king sent Ealdred, bishop of London, with a company : they were to ride and overtake him, before he came to the ship : but they could not, or else they would not. And Harold then went out from the mouth of the Avon : but he met such stiff weather that he escaped with difficulty, and much damage was done to him there. Then he went to Ireland, when good weather came. And Godwine and those who were with him went from Thorney to Bruges to Baldwin's land, in one ship, with as great treasures as ever they could stow thereon for each man. It would have seemed wonderful to every Englishmen, if anyone had told him before that this would so take place. For Godwine had been to such an extent exalted, as if he had ruled the king and all England. His sons were earls, and the darlings of the king : his daughter was the king's wedded wife. She was brought to Wherwell, and committed to the abbess.

Then soon came William earl from beyond the sea, with a great company of Frenchmen. And the king received him, and as many of his comrades as it pleased him, and let him again depart.

From the *Canterbury Chronicle* (E).

Then came Eustace from beyond sea, . . . and went to the king, and had what speech with him he would, and betook himself homewards. When he came east to Canterbury, then he and his men had a meal, and went on to Dover.

When he was some miles or more on this side of Dover, he clad himself in his coat of mail, and all his companions likewise, and went to Dover. And when they came thither, they wished to quarter themselves wheresoever it pleased them. Then a man of Eustace came and wished to lodge at the house of a householder against his will. Then he wounded the householder; and the householder slew him. Then Eustace sprang upon his horse, and his comrades on theirs, and went to the householder, and slew him upon his own hearth. Then they went up to the town, and slew both within and without, more than twenty men. And the townsmen, on the other side, slew nineteen men, and wounded they knew not how many. And Eustace escaped with a few men, and went back to the king, and made known to him, but only in part, how they had fared. And the king was in mighty wrath against the townsmen, and sent for earl Godwine, and bade him carry war into Kent to Dover, because Eustace had told the king that it had been rather the guilt of the townsfolk than his own: but it was not so. And the earl would not agree to the inroad, because it was hateful to him to destroy his own people.

Then the king sent after all his 'witan,' and bade them come to Gloucester nigh to the second St. Mary's Mass [the Nativity, Sept. 8]. At that time the foreigners [Frenchmen] had built a castle in Herefordshire in the country of earl Swegen, and wrought every harm and insult to the king's men thereabout that they could. Then Godwine earl, and Swegen earl, and Harold earl, came together at Beverstone, and many a man with them, in order that they might go to their king and lord, and to all the 'witan' who were gathered with him, that they might have the counsel and help of the king and of all his 'witan,' how they might avenge the shame of the king and all the people. Then the foreigners were beforehand with the king, and accused the earls, that they might not come within the king's sight. For it was said that the earls would come thither to betray the king. There was come Siward earl, and Leofric earl, and much folk with them from the

north to the king. And it was made known to earl Godwine and his sons that the king and the men who were with him would take measures against them : and they arrayed themselves firmly against them, though it was a hateful thing to them that they should make a stand against their king and lord. Then the 'witan' decreed, that on either side men should cease from any act of hostility. And the king gave God's peace and his full friendship on either side.

Then the king and his 'witan' decreed that a second meeting of all the 'witan' should be held in London at the equinox of autumn. And the king bade call out the army, both to the south and to the north of the Thames, all that ever was best. Then Swegen earl was proclaimed an outlaw ; and Godwine earl, and Harold earl were summoned to the meeting, as quickly as they might come to it. And when they came thither [to London] then they were summoned to the meeting. Then he [Godwine] asked for safe-conduct and hostages that he might come securely into the meeting, and out of the meeting. Then the king asked for all the thanes whom the earls had had, and they gave them all into his hand. Then the king sent again to them and bade them come to the king's council with twelve men. Then again the earl asked for safe-conduct and hostages, that he might clear himself of every one of the things that were laid to his charge. Then he was refused the hostages, and was given a safe-conduct for five nights to leave the land. Then Godwine earl and Swegen earl went to Bosham, and launched their ships, and betook themselves beyond sea, and sought the protection of Baldwin, and dwelt there all the winter. And Harold earl went west to Ireland, and was there all the winter, in the protection of the king.¹ And soon after this king Edward forsook the lady who had been hallowed as his queen, and caused to be taken from her all that she owned, in land, and in gold, and in silver, and in all things, and entrusted her to his sister at Wherwell.

¹ Diarmaid, king of Leinster, according to the *Life of Edward the Confessor*.

XII. MACBETH.

Macbeth was not slain in the great battle with Malcolm and Siward when Birnamwood came to high Dunsinane hill, but lived to be slain by Malcolm three years later. Further, far from his being bloody

Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name,

we have the contemporary account by Marianus Scotus of his distinguished charity; and tradition reported him a good and wise ruler. It is not even clear that he slew Duncan otherwise than in fair fight. It appears from the *Chartulary of St. Andrews* that his wife *Gruoch* was *filia Bodhe* and therefore a descendant of Kenneth MacAlpin, which may have justified the action in the eyes of matriarchal Picts. Nevertheless, since Literature is greater than History, the contrary of all these things will continue to be believed.

From the *Worcester Chronicle* (D).

1054. In this year Siward earl fared with a great army to Scotland, both with a fleet and with land forces, and fought against the Scots, and put to flight the king Macbeothen, and slew all the best in the land, and brought thence great war-plunder, such as no man had ever got before. But his son Osbarn, and his sister's son Sihward, and many of his house-carls, and also of the king's, were there slain, on the day of the Seven Sleepers [July 27th].

From the *Abingdon Chronicle* (C).

1054. In this year went Siward earl with a great army into Scotland, and wrought great slaughter among the Scots, and put them to flight. But the king escaped. Also there fell many on the earl's part, both Danish and English, also his own son.

From the *Chronicle* of Marianus Scotus (1028-81).

(MS. *Vatican* 830, printed in Pertz, *Mon. Germ. Hist., Script.* vol. v. pp. 556-8.)

1040. Duncan king of Scotland (*Donnchad rex Scotiae*) is killed in the autumn, 19 Kal. Sept., by his *dux* (either

war-leader or thane) Macbeth son of Finlay (*Macbethad mac Finnlæch*), who succeeded him in the kingdom seventeen years.

1050. Macbeth king of Scotland (*Rex Scotiae Macbethad*) distributed silver at Rome broadcast to the poor.

1057. The son of Finlay (*Macfinlaeg*) is killed in August. Malcolm son of Duncan (*Moelcoluim filius Donchaed*) rules Scotland.

From the *Annals of Tigernach* (d. 1088).

(MS. Bodl. Rawlinson, B. 488, in Skene, *Chronicles of the Picts and Scots*, 1867, p. 78; and *Rev. Celt.* xvii, 395, 399. The annals are partly in Latin, partly in Irish: these in Irish.)

[1054.] Battle between the Albanich and the Saxons, in which many of the soldiers were slain.

[1058.] Macbeth son of Finlay (*MacBethad mac Findlaich*) supreme king of Alban (*Airdri Alban*) slain by Malcolm son of Duncan (*Maelcolaim mac Dondchada*).

XIII. AN EARTHQUAKE.

From the *Worcester Chronicle* (D).

1049.¹ In this year was moreover an earthquake on the Kalends of May, in many places: in Worcester, in Wick [Worcestershire] and in Derby, and elsewhere. And also there was great death among men and cattle. And the wild-fire also did much evil in Derbyshire and elsewhere.

XIV. WELSH WARS AND CLERICAL MOUSTACHES.

From the *Abingdon Chronicle* (C).

(The first portion of this entry is also found in the *Worcester Chronicle* (D).)

1056. In this year died Æthelstan, the venerable bishop [of Hereford], on the 4th of the Ides of February, and his body lies in Hereford town; and they made Leofgar bishop, who was the mass-priest of earl Harold. He wore his

¹ Florence of Worcester says that the earthquake was on a Sunday: and May 1 was a Sunday in 1048 (Plummer).

moustaches during his priesthood, until he was bishop. He forsook his chrism and his rood, his ghostly weapons, and took to his spear and his sword, after his bishophood. And so he went to the war against Griffin the Welsh king: and there he was slain, and his priests with him, and Ælfnoth the sheriff, and many good men with them: and the rest fled. This was eight nights before midsummer. Hard it is to tell the misery, and all the marching, and the campaigning, and the labour, and the destruction of men, and of horses too, which all the English army endured, until Leofric earl came to them, and Harold earl, and Ealdred bishop [of Worcester]. And they made a peace there between them, so that Griffin swore oaths that he would be to king Edward a faithful under-king, and a loyal. And bishop Ealdred succeeded to the bishopric, which Leofgar had held eleven weeks and four days.

From the later *Annales Cambriae* (as edited by J. Williams ab Ithel in the *Rolls Series*, 1860, p. 25).

1055. Grifin, son of Lewelin, ravaged Hereford.

From the *Brut y Tywysogion* (Welsh, as translated by J. Williams ab Ithel in the *Rolls Series*, 1860, p. 44).

1054. . . . Gruffudd, son of Llywelyn, raised an army against the Saxons, and arrayed his forces at Hereford; and against him the Saxons rose with a very great host; . . . After a severely hard battle, the Saxons, unable to bear the assault of the Britons, took to flight, and fell with a very great slaughter. Gruffudd closely pursued them to the fortress, which he entered, and depopulated and demolished the fortress and burned the town; and from thence, with very great booty, he returned happily and victoriously to his own country.

XV. AN EXETER GUILD.

Old English text in Thorpe, *Diplomatarium Anglicum*, 613.

This association is made in Exeter, for the love of God and for the need of our souls, both for the prosperity of our life,

and also for the days to come when we shall appear before the judgment of God. Now we have resolved that our meeting shall be thrice in the year: once at Michaelmas, again at the Mass of St. Mary after midwinter,¹ and the third time at All Hallows Mass after Easter.² And every guild-brother is to have two sesters³ of malt, and every novice one, and a 'pennyworth' of honey. And let the mass priest sing two masses, one for the friends living and one for the friends departed, at each meeting; and let those in minor orders sing two psalters of psalms, one for the friends living, and one for the friends departed. And after a death, each six masses, or six psalters of psalms; when a man goes on a pilgrimage to Rome, each man five pence; at a house burning, each man one penny. And if any man neglect the appointed day, for the first time three masses, for the second five; for the third time can no excuse be taken, save it be sickness or his lord's need. And if any man pass the appointed day for his contribution, let him pay double. And if any man of this association insult another, let him make good with 30 pence. Now we pray for the love of God that every man hold this meeting rightly, even as we have rightly ordered it. May God help us therein.

XVI. THE THANES' GUILD AT CAMBRIDGE.

Old English text in Thorpe, *Diplomatarium Anglicum*, 610.

Here is, in this writing, the declaration of the agreement which this association has ordained in the Thanes' Guild in Cambridge. That then is first, that each should swear an oath of true faith to the other, upon the holy relics, in the sight of God and of the world; and that all the association should ever support him who had the greatest right. If any

¹ Candlemas (Feb. 2).

² Not All Saints Day, but the feast of the dedication of the Pantheon in honour of all martyrs (May 13).

³ The sester is a measure which varies greatly. At Abingdon, on feast days, the monks were allowed a *sextarius* of mead at dinner between six, and at supper between twelve.

guild-brother die, let all the guild bring him where he desired, and let him who comes not thereto pay a sester of honey. . . . And if then any guild-brother stand in need of the help of his fellows, and it be made known to the nearest guild-member . . . if that member neglect it, let him pay one pound. . . . And if anyone slay a guild-brother, let there be no atonement save eight pounds: but if the slayer scorn to make that atonement, let all the guild avenge their member, and all bear the feud. . . . And if any guild-brother slay a man . . . whose wergeld is 1200 shillings . . . let each guild-brother contribute half a mark to his aid: if the slain be a 'churl,' two oras: if 'Welsh,' one ora. But if the brother slay his man through folly and wantonness, let him bear what he has wrought. And if the brother slay his guild-brother through his own folly, let him bear with the kin of the slain that which he has violated: and let him buy back his membership of the guild with eight pounds, or else forever lack our fellowship and friendship. And if a brother eat or drink with one who slew his guild-brother (save it be in the presence of king, bishop or aldorman) let him pay a pound, unless his two comrades at table support him in denying that he knew the man to be the slayer. If any guild-brother insult another, let him pay a sester of honey, unless he can excuse himself with his two comrades at table. . . . And if any brother die, or fall sick, out of the land, let his guild-brethren fetch him, and bring him, dead or alive, where he desires, under the same penalty that has been said if he die at home, and the guild-brother attend not his corpse. . . .

XVII. THE PLOUGHMAN: FROM ÆLFRIC'S 'COLLOQUY.'

The Colloquy of Abbot Ælfrie (Latin with an English gloss) is a series of dialogues devised to help the young student of Latin. It is printed in Wright's *Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies*, (2nd edit., ed. R. P. Wülker, 1884, I, 88, etc.)

Teacher. What dost thou say, ploughman? How dost thou go about thy work? *Ploughman.* Lo, my lord, hard work have I. I go out at daybreak urging my oxen to the field,

and I yoke them to the plough. However stark the winter, I dare not lurk at home, for fear of my lord. But when my oxen are yoked, and the share and the coulter are fastened to the plough, each day I must plough a full acre, or more. *Teacher*. Hast thou any comrade? *Ploughman*. I have a boy, urging on the oxen with the goad, who, too, is now hoarse with cold and shouting. *Teacher*. What else dost thou? *Ploughman*. Verily, I do still more. I must fill the mangers of the oxen with hay, and water them, and bear out their dung. *Teacher*. Oh! Oh! Great work it is! *Ploughman*. Yea, Sir, great work it is, for I am not free.

XVIII. DEATH OF THE CONFESSOR AND REIGN OF HAROLD.

From the *Abingdon Chronicle* (C).

1065. . . . And king Edward came to Westminster at midwinter, and caused the minster to be hallowed, which he himself had built, to the honour of God, and of S. Peter, and of all God's saints. And the church was consecrated on Childermas Day [Holy Innocents, Dec. 28]. And he died on Twelfth Eve [Eve of the Epiphany] and was buried on Twelfth Day in the same church, as it is said hereafter.

This year Edward · lord of the English
Sent his soothfast · soul to Christ. . . .
Honoured he ruled · the Welsh and the Scots,
And the Britons also · Ethelred's son.
Angles and Saxons · champions strong.
As it lies surrounded · by cold sea waves
That land to Edward · the noble king
Obeyed in loyalty · warriors bold.
E'er blithe of heart · was the blameless king
Though he long before · of land bereft
In exile dwelt · far and wide on earth. . . .
And further the sage · committed his realm
To a man illustrious · Harold himself ·
A noble earl · He in all time
Loyally obeyed · his lord and master;
In words and deeds · he nought neglected
That needful was · to his sovereign king.

And in this year was Harold also consecrated king: but he met with little quietness therein, while he ruled the realm.

1066. In this year came king Harold from York to Westminster at the Easter following the midwinter when the king died. . . . Then was there throughout all England such a sign seen in the Heavens as no man had ever seen. Some men said that it was *cometa* the star, which some men call the haired star. And it appeared first on the eve of *Letania Major*, that is the 8th of the Kalends of May [Apr. 24], and so shone all the seven nights. And soon after came Tostig earl from beyond the sea to the Isle of Wight, with as great a fleet as he could gather: and there they gave him both money and provisions. And thence he went, and plundered every place on the coast which he could reach, till he came to Sandwich. Then was it told to king Harold, who was in London, that Tostig his brother was come to Sandwich. Then Harold gathered a navy, and also an army, such as no king before in this land had gathered. For it was told to him for a truth that earl William from Normandy, the kinsman of king Edward, would come hither and win this land—even as it afterwards came to pass. When Tostig learnt that king Harold was on the way to Sandwich, he departed from Sandwich, and took some sailors from the navy with him (some went willingly, some not) and went north to the ~~Humber~~. And there he harried in Lincolnshire, and slew many good men. When Edwin earl and Morker earl knew that, they came thither and drove him from the land. Then he went to Scotland, and the king of Scots gave him protection, and helped him with provisions, and he abode there all the summer. Then came king Harold to Sandwich, and there waited for his fleet, for it was a long time till it could be gathered. And when his fleet was gathered, he went to Wight, and there he abode all the summer and the autumn. And everywhere by the sea-shore the land-levy was out, though in the end it availed nothing. When it was the Nativity of

¹ Space in MS. It should be Humber, as MS. D shows.

St. Mary [Sept. 8] the men's rations were all gone, and they could no longer be kept there. Then the men were allowed to go home, and the king rode up. And the ships sailed to London, but many were destroyed before they came thither.

And when the ships had come home, then came king Harald from Norway, north into the Tyne, unexpectedly, with a very great navy, it might be ³⁰⁰ or more. And Tostig earl came to him with all that he had got, even as they had agreed; and they both went, with all the fleet, along the Ouse up toward York. Then they told this to king Harold in the south, when he had come from the fleet, how king Harald of Norway and earl Tostig had come to land near York. Then king Harold went northward by day and night, as quickly as he could gather his levies; but before he could come, earl Edwin and earl Morker had gathered as large a levy as they could, and had fought with the invaders. And there was great slaughter and many of the English slain, or drowned, or put to flight, and the Northmen had the victory. This fight was on the Vigil of S. Matthew the Apostle [Sept. 20] a Wednesday. Then after the fight king Harald of Norway and earl Tostig entered York, with as many men as they wished. Then hostages were given them from the town, and help given to provision them, and so they went thence to their ships. And they spoke of a full peace, and they all would go south together, and win the land.

Then meanwhile came Harold, king of the English, with all his levy on the Sunday to Tadcaster, and there marshalled his force. Then, on Monday, he marched right through York. And Harald, king of Norway, and earl Tostig, and their host had gone from their ships, beyond York to Stamford Bridge, because it had been promised to them of a certainty that, from all the district, hostages should be brought to them there. Then came Harold, king of the English, against them, unawares, beyond the bridge: and they met, and till far on in the day they fought very sternly. And there was Harald,

¹ Space in MS. D and E show that the number should be 300.

king of Norway, slain, and earl Tostig also, and a mighty host with them, both of Northmen and English. And the Northmen [fled the English. Then was there one of the men of Norway who withstood the English host, so that they could not pass over the bridge, and win their victory. Then an Englishman shot at him with an arrow: but it availed nought; and then another came under the bridge, and stabbed him under his mail coat. Then Harold, king of the English, came over the bridge, and his army on with him, and smote a great slaughter there, both Norwegians and Flemings. And Harold let the king's son Hetmund go back to Norway with all the ships.]¹

XIX. STAMFORD BRIDGE AND HASTINGS FROM THE *Worcester Chronicle* (D).

The *Worcester Chronicle* tells the story more briefly than it is told in the *Abingdon Chronicle*. From the point where that breaks off imperfect, the *Worcester Chronicle* continues:

There was slain Harald Fairhair,² and earl Tosti. And the Northmen who were left took to flight, with the Englishmen following them, and smiting them cruelly, till some of them reached their ships. Some were drowned, some were burnt: so many ways destroyed, that few were left,³ and the

¹ Here the manuscript ends, mutilated. The passage within square brackets has been added, in later handwriting and later English, to make a kind of completion. The writer knew that earl Tostig's company were Flemings, but he is wrong in giving Harald's son the name Hetmund, and in saying that he returned with all his ships.

² An absurd mistake; the invader was, of course, Harald Hardrada. Harald Fairhair is more than a century earlier. His *Saga* has much to tell of his dealings with Æthelstan, who is said to have fostered his son Hakon.

³ A Runic stone discovered in 1897, and preserved in Slesvig cathedral, bears a battered inscription which seems to run: '... caused this stone to be raised in memory of Halfdan son of Sulki, who died in battle ... and Guthmund engraved the runes. He rests in England at Skia.' *Skia* is apparently Skidby near Stamford Bridge. See Wimmer, *De Danske Runemindesmærker*, Copenhagen, 1893-1908, I, clv., etc.

English held the field. Then the king gave peace to Olaf, the son of the Norwegian king, and to their bishop, and the earl of Orkney, and all those who were left in the ships. And they went up to our king, and swore him oaths, that they would ever hold peace and friendship with this land. And the king let them go home with twenty-four ships.

These two pitched battles were fought within five nights.

Then came William, earl of Normandy, to Pevensey, on the eve of S. Michael [Sept. 28], and as soon as they were able to move on, they made a fortification at Hastings. This was then told to king Harold, and he gathered a great army, and came towards him at the old apple tree. And William came against him, unawares, ere his men were marshalled. But the king nevertheless fought against him very valiantly, with the men who would serve him, and there was great slaughter on both sides. There was Harold king slain, and Leofwine earl, his brother, and Gyrth earl, his brother, and many good men. And the French held the battle-field, as God permitted it to them, by reason of the sins of the people.

There is also a short account of the events of this year in the *Canterbury Chronicle* (E), but it adds nothing substantial to the account given in the other *Chronicles*.

XX. THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD BRIDGE.

From the *Heimskringla* of Snorri Sturluson, ed. F. Jónsson, Copenhagen, 1893-1900: *Saga of Harald Hardrada*, caps. 83-97. The translation given below is based on that of Samuel Laing (1844), but has been revised.

NOTE.—On the ‘*Heimskringla*’ story of *Stamford Bridge*.

The story of William the Conqueror’s policy and conquest does not fall within the scope of this book. The Battle of Stamford Bridge, however, does. The only full account of this battle is in the *Saga of Harald Hardrada* (part of the *Heimskringla* of Snorri Sturluson). This is dismissed as unreliable by Professor Oman: ‘So many of its statements are utterly incorrect, that we cannot accept the rest.’

Now the *Saga* is demonstrably inaccurate as to the family relationships of the English leaders; Morker, for instance, is represented as Harold's brother, though really his brother-in-law. Further, Morker is said to have fallen in the first battle outside York (the battle of Fulford). But these are points with regard to which the Norse invaders might well be in error: there is evidence that it was believed at the time among the Northmen that Morker *had* perished amid the rout of his army: and as the surviving Northmen left England a few days later, they may never have discovered their mistake. The *Worcester Chronicle* (D) speaks of Harald Hardrada as 'Harald Fairhair.' Such a mistake would invalidate any Scandinavian document, but is pardonably made by the English chronicler, as it is also by many other non-Scandinavian authorities. Equally, the account, given by the Northmen, of the most crushing defeat they ever suffered from the English is not necessarily invalidated by the mistakes they make about the family of the English king who inflicted the defeat.

And we must note that, in what relates to the actual fighting, the *Saga* agrees with the *Chronicle*, and supplements it. The *Saga* explains why so many of the English were *drowned* in the first battle; it agrees as to the date of that battle, as to the capture of York, and the events leading up to the battle of Stamford Bridge. The details also of the battle of Stamford Bridge are confirmed by the *Chronicle*, at any rate in so far as the two accounts emphasise that Harold caught the Northmen unawares, whilst they were awaiting the hostages whose surrender had been promised, and were expecting no further resistance in the North. The *Chronicle* gives the number of Hardrada's fleet as 300 ships, and the *Saga* fully bears this out. Now Cnut's standing English fleet had been only 16 ships: Harthacnut had caused dissatisfaction by raising this to 32: the pious Confessor had cut down his naval estimates first to 14 and then to 5. Comparing these figures, we see that Hardrada had a vast armament. Yet the *Worcester Chronicle* makes it clear that Harold was

able to destroy the bulk of Hardrada's host (that is to say *all*, except the few who had been left behind on board the ships to guard them), and to do this with the forces he had brought with him in his lightning march from London, and after the local Northumbrian levies which he came to reinforce had been badly routed. This calls for explanation, and the explanation is given by the *Saga*. That the Northmen were surprised whilst their army was divided, and when they were only imperfectly armed, as told in the *Saga*, is a fact necessary to the understanding of the situation. The way their lack of armour is dwelt upon in at least one scaldic poem quoted in the *Saga* confirms this. These scaldic poems are excellent evidence. The words of Snorri in this connection are merely common sense :

‘There were scalds in the court of Harald [Fairhair] whose poems the people know by heart even at the present day, together with all the songs about the kings who have ruled in Norway since his time ; and we rest the foundations of our story principally upon the songs which were sung in the presence of the chiefs themselves or of their sons, and take all to be true that is found in such poems about their feats and battles : for although it be the fashion with scalds to praise most those in whose presence they are standing, yet no one would dare to relate to a chief what he, and all those who heard it, knew to be a false and imaginary, not a true account of his deeds ; because that would be mockery, not praise.’

It was the English custom to fight on foot, and Oman doubts the accuracy of the *Saga* account of their cavalry charge. But it is agreed that Harold's rapid march from Sussex to York, and back to the Sussex coast, can only be accounted for on the supposition that his force was mounted—mounted infantry, doubtless : but even mounted infantry might well have continued to use their horses in rounding up and riding down bodies of half-armed men whom they had surprised in the open. Without horses, they might have routed, but could hardly have exterminated, a force probably

much larger, and certainly much less encumbered with heavy armour.

The *Chronicle* tells us that Olaf and the earl of Orkney survived: the *Saga* explains why; they had been left behind to guard the ships. Oman points out that the desperate defence of the bridge is not mentioned in the *Saga*. But this defence is narrated, not in the original *Chronicle* account, but only in a very late addition to the *Chronicle*, made by someone who believed that Hardrada's son was named Hetmundus. Nevertheless it represents the tradition on the English side, and is probably enough true. But if we do not disqualify it, on account of the 'Hetmundus' error, we ought not to disqualify the *Saga* account (which gives the tradition on the Norwegian side) because of similar errors with regard to the English leaders. We may conclude that, whereas the *Saga* is entirely inaccurate as to English affairs, it gives the traditional account of the battle of Stamford Bridge, such as was taken back to Scandinavia by the surviving Northmen. This agrees remarkably with the *Chronicle* account, and where it does differ (*Fairhair*, *Hetmundus*) it is the *Chronicle* which is in error.

In any case a source book cannot neglect the account of the *Saga*. The student ought to know what is the origin of the 'seven feet of English ground,' and of other things equally famous.

When king Harald was ready, and the wind became favourable, he sailed out to sea; and he himself landed in Shetland, but a part of his fleet in the Orkney Islands. King Harald stopped but a short time in Shetland before sailing to Orkney, from whence he took with him a great armed force, and the earls Pál and Erlend, the sons of earl Thorfinn; but he left behind him there the queen Ellisif and their daughters, Maria and Ingigerd. Then he sailed, leaving Scotland and England westward of him, and landed at a place called Cleveland. There he went on shore and plundered. . . .

Thereafter the king sailed to the Humber, and up along the river, and moored his ships. Up in York were two earls, Morker (*Morukári*) and earl Walthiof his brother, and they had a very great army. While the army of the earls was coming down from the upper part of the country, king Harald lay in the Ouse. King Harald now went on the land, and drew up his men. The one arm of his line stood on the bank of the river, and the other stretched over the land to a ditch; there was a fen deep and broad and full of water. The earls let their army proceed slowly down along the river, with all their troops in line. The king's banner was next the river; the line was thickest there, and thinnest at the ditch, where also the men were weakest. When the earls advanced downwards along the ditch, the arm of the Northmen's line towards the ditch gave way; and the Englishmen followed, thinking that the Northmen would fly. There the banner of Morker advanced.

When king Harald saw that the English array had come down by the ditch against them, he ordered the charge to be sounded, and urged on his men vehemently. He ordered the standard Land-ravager to be carried before him, and pressed the attack so hard that all gave way before it; there was a great slaughter among the earls' men. Then their army soon turned to flight, some running up the river, some down, and most leaping into the ditch, where the dead lay so thick that the Northmen could go dryfoot over the fen; there earl Morker fell. So says Stein Herdisarson:

The gallant Harald drove along,
 Flying but fighting, the whole throng.
 At last, confused, they could not fight,
 And the whole body took to flight.
 Up from the river's silent stream
 At once rose desperate splash and scream;
 But they who stood like men this fray
 Round Morukari's body lay.

This song was composed by Stein Herdisarson about Olaf, son of king Harald; and he speaks of Olaf being in this

battle with king Harald his father. These things are also spoken of in the song called 'Harald's Stave':

Earl Walthiof's men
Lay in the fen,
By sword down hewed,
So thickly strewed,
That Norsemen say
They paved a way
Across the fen
For the brave Norsemen.

Earl Walthiof and the people who escaped fled up to the town of York; there had been the greatest loss of men. This battle took place on the Wednesday next before Matthew's day.

Earl Tosti had come from the land of the Flemings to king Harald, as soon as he arrived in England, and the earl was present at all these battles. It happened (as he had told Harald before they met), that in England many people flocked to them, kinsmen and friends of earl Tosti, and thus the king's forces were much strengthened. After the battle now told of, all people in the nearest districts submitted to Harald, but some fled. Then king Harald prepared to take the town, and laid his army at Stamford Bridge. And because the king had won so great a victory against so great chiefs and so great an army, all the people were dismayed, and despaired of making any opposition. Then the townsmen determined to send a message to king Harald, and to submit themselves and the town to his authority. All this was settled, so that on Sunday the king proceeded to the town with all his army, and appointed a Thing outside the town; the king and his men, and the townsfolk came to the Thing; all the people agreed to yield homage to king Harald, and gave him, as hostages, the sons of the most considerable persons; for earl Tosti knew all the people in the town. And in the evening the king returned to his ships, after this easy victory, and was very merry. A Thing was appointed within the town early on Monday morning, and then king Harald was to name officers to rule over the town, to give

out laws, and bestow fiefs. The same evening, after sunset, king Harold Godwinsson came to the town from the south with a numerous army; he rode into the city with the goodwill and consent of all the townsmen; all the gates and roads were beset so that the Northmen could receive no intelligence, and the army remained all night in the town.

On Monday, when king Harald Sigurdsson had taken breakfast, he ordered the trumpets to sound for going on shore. The army got ready, and he divided the men, who should go and who should stay behind; in every group he appointed two men to land for one to stay behind. Earl Tosti and his retinue prepared to land with king Harald; and, for watching the ships, there remained behind Olaf the king's son, the earls of Orkney, Pál and Erlend, and Eystein Orri, son of Thorberg Arnason, who was the most able and best beloved by the king of all the landed-men; the king had promised him his daughter Maria. The weather was uncommonly fine, and it was hot sunshine. The men left their armour behind, and went up with their shields, helmets and spears, and girt with swords; and many had also arrows and bows, and all were very merry. And as they went towards the town, a great army came against them, and they saw a cloud of dust from horses' feet, and under it shining shields and bright armour. The king halted his people, and called to him earl Tosti, and asked him what army this could be. The earl replied that he thought it most likely to be a hostile army, but possibly it might be some of his kinsmen who were seeking for mercy and friendship, and to obtain peace and safety from the king. Then said the king that they must first halt, and discover what force it was. They did so, and the nearer the force came the greater it appeared, and their shining arms were to the sight like glancing ice.

Then said king Harald, 'Let us now fall upon some good and wise counsel; for it is not to be concealed that this is an hostile army, and the king himself without doubt is here.'

Then said the earl, 'The first counsel is to turn about as fast as we can to our ships to get our men and our weapons,

and then we will make a defence according to our ability ; or otherwise let our ships defend us, for there these horsemen have no power over us.'

Then said king Harald, 'I will follow another plan : put three of our best horses under three of our briskest lads, and let them ride with all speed to tell our people to come quickly to our relief—for the Englishmen shall have a hard fray of it before we give ourselves up for lost.'

The earl said the king must order in this, as in all things, and added that it was by no means his wish to fly. Then king Harald ordered his banner Land-ravager to be set up ; and Frirek was the name of him who bore the banner. . . .

King Harold Godwinsson had come with a very great army, both of horse and foot. Now king Harald Sigurdsson was riding around his army, to see how it was drawn up ; he was upon a black horse, with a blaze on its forehead ; the horse stumbled under him, so that the king fell off. He got up in haste, and said, 'A fall forebodes a good journey.' The English king Harold said to the Northmen who were with him, 'Do ye know the big man who fell from his horse, with the blue kirtle and the beautiful helmet?' 'That is the king himself,' said they. The English king said, 'A great man, and of stately appearance, but I think his luck has left him.'

Twenty horsemen rode forward from the English host towards the Northmen's array ; and all of them, and likewise their horses, were clad in armour. Then said one of the horsemen, 'Is earl Tosti in this army?'

He answers, 'It is not to be denied that ye will find him here.'

Then said the horseman, 'Harold thy brother sends thee greeting, and adds that thou shalt have pardon, and the whole of Northumberland ; and rather than thou shouldst not submit to him, he will give thee the third part of his kingdom to rule over along with himself.'

The earl replies, 'This is something different from the enmity and scorn he offered last winter ; and if this had been

offered then, it would have saved many a man's life who now is dead, and it would have been better for the kingdom of England. But if I accept of this offer, what will he give king Harald Sigurdsson for his trouble ?'

The horseman said, 'He has spoken also of this ; and he will give him seven feet of English ground, or as much more as he may be taller than other men.'

Then says the earl, 'Go now and tell king Harold to get ready for battle ; for never shall the Northmen say with truth that earl Tosti left king Harald Sigurdsson, to join his enemy's troops, when he came to fight west here in England. Rather will we all resolve together to die with honour, or to gain England by a victory.'

Then the horsemen rode back. King Harald Sigurdsson said to the earl, 'Who was the man who spoke so well ?'

The earl replied, 'That was king Harold Godwinesson.'

Then said king Harald Sigurdsson, 'Too long was that concealed from me, for they had come so near to our army, that this Harold should never have been able to tell of our men's slaughter.'

Then said the earl, 'That is true, lord ; it was imprudent for such a chief, and it might have been as you say. But I saw that he was going to offer me peace and a great dominion, and that I should be his slayer if I betrayed him ; I would rather that he should be my slayer than I his.'

King Harald Sigurdsson said to his men, 'That was a little man, and he sat proudly in his stirrups.'

It is said that king Harald Sigurdsson made this stave :

Advance ! advance !
 No helmets glance,
 But blue swords play
 In our array.
 Advance ! Advance !
 No mail-coats glance,
 But hearts are here
 That ne'er knew fear.¹

¹ Translated literally this runs : ' Without hauberks do we go in array to receive blows from the brown blades. Helmets shine. I have not my

His coat of mail was called Emma; and it was so long that it reached to the middle of his leg, and so strong that weapon had never pierced it. Then said king Harald Sigurdsson, 'That stave is ill made, and I must try to make a better'; and he sang this:

In battle-storm we seek no lee,
With skulking head, and bending knee,
Behind the hollow shield.
With eye and hand we fend the head;
Courage and skill stand in the stead
Of ring-mail, helm, and shield,
In Hilda's bloody field.

Thereupon Thiodolf sang:

And should our king in battle fall—
A fate that God may give to all—
His sons will vengeance take;
And never shone the sun upon
Two nobler eaglets in his run,
And them we'll ne'er forsake.

Now the battle began. The Englishmen made a hot assault upon the Northmen, who sustained it bravely. It was no easy matter for the English to ride against the Northmen on account of their spears; therefore they rode in a circle around them. And the fight at first was but loose and light, as long as the Northmen kept their order of battle; for although the English rode hard against the Northmen, they gave way again immediately, as they could do nothing against them. But when the Northmen thought they perceived that the enemy were making but weak assaults, they set after them, meaning to drive them into flight; but, when they had broken their shield-rampart, the Englishmen rode up from all sides, and threw arrows and spears on them. Now when king Harald Sigurdsson saw this, he went into the fray where

[hauberk]. Our gear is down by the ships.' The extant verses relating to this battle will be found in the great edition of the *Carmina Scaldica* by Finnur Jónsson. Laing's renderings are very inexact. Jónsson gives literal translations into Danish.

the greatest crash of weapons was. There was a sharp conflict, and many people fell on both sides. King Harald then was in such a rage that he ran out in front of his men, and hewed down with both hands; neither helmet nor armour could withstand him, and all who were nearest gave way before him. It was then very near with the English that they had taken to flight. So says Arnor, the earl's scald:

Where battle-storm was ringing,
Where arrow-cloud was singing,
Harald stood there,
Of armour bare,
His deadly sword still swinging.
The foemen feel its bite;
His Norsemen rush to fight,
Danger to share
With Harald there,
Where steel on steel was ringing.

King Harald Sigurdsson was hit by an arrow in the throat, and that was his death-wound; he fell, and all who had advanced with him, except those who retired with the banner. There was afterwards the warmest conflict, and earl Tosti had taken over the king's banner. They began on both sides to form their array again, and for a long time there was a pause in the fighting. Then Thiodolf sang:

The army stands in hushed dismay;
Stilled is the clamour of the fray.
Harald is dead, and with him goes
The spirit to withstand our foes.
A bloody tribute folk must pay
For their king's folly on this day.
He fell; and now, without disguise,
We say this business was not wise.

But before the battle began again, Harold Godwinsson offered his brother earl Tosti peace, and also quarter to the Northmen who were still alive; but the Northmen called out all of them together that they would rather fall, one across

the other, than accept of quarter from the Englishmen. They set up a war-shout, and the battle began again ; so says Arnor, the earl's scald :

The king, whose name would ill-doers scare,
The gold-tipped arrow would not spare.
Unhelmed and mail-less, without shield,
He fell among us in the field.
The gallant men who saw him fall
Would take no quarter ; one and all
Resolved to die with their loved king,
Around his corpse in a corpse-ring.

Eystein Orri came up at this moment from the ships, with the men who followed him, and all were clad in armour. Then Eystein got king Harald's banner Land-ravager. And now was, for the third time, one of the sharpest of conflicts ; many of the Englishmen fell, and they were near to taking flight. This conflict is called Orri's storm. Eystein and his men had hastened so fast from the ships that they were quite exhausted, and scarcely fit to fight before they came into the battle ; but afterwards they became so furious, that they did not guard themselves with their shields as long as they could stand upright. At last they threw off their coats of ring-mail, and then the Englishmen could easily lay their blows at them ; and many fell from weariness, and died without a wound. Almost all the leaders of the Northmen fell. This happened towards evening ; and then it went, as one might expect, that all had not the same fate, for many fled, and were lucky enough to escape in various ways ; and darkness fell before the slaughter was altogether ended. . . .

William the Bastard, earl of Rouen, had learnt of the death of his kinsman king Edward and also that Harold Godwinsson had been chosen and consecrated king of England ; but it appeared to him that he had a better right to the kingdom of England than Harold, because of the relationship between him and king Edward. . . .

King Harold Godwinsson gave Olaf, king Harald Sigurdsson's son, leave to go away, with the men who were

with him and had not fallen in battle ; but he himself turned with his army to go south, for he had heard that William the Bastard had come north to England and was subduing the country to himself. . . . Harold and earl William met in the south of England at Helsingja-port ; there was a great battle, in which fell king Harold and earl Gyrth his brother, and a great part of his men. This was the nineteenth night after the fall of king Harald Sigurdsson. . . .

William was proclaimed king of England. He sent a message to earl Walthiof that they should be reconciled, and gave him assurance of safety, to come to the place of meeting. The earl set out with a few men ; but . . . they took him, and put him in fetters, and afterwards he was beheaded ; and the English call him a saint. Thus says Thorkell :

William came o'er the sea,
With bloody sword came he ;
Cold heart and bloody hand
Now rule the English land.
Earl Walthiof he slew—
Walthiof the brave and true.
Cold heart and bloody hand
Now rule the English land.¹

¹ This spirited translation by Laing of the second stanza of the poem in praise of Walthiof by Thorkell Skallason is well known, chiefly owing to the use Kingsley made of it in *Hereward*. Translated literally, it runs :—

Of a truth has William—he who came from the south over the cold sea—
—entrapped under a truce the valiant Walthiof, who made the steel red.
Yet a gallant man was my lord [Walthiof] : never shall there die a more
glorious prince. True it is, that it will be long ere slaying of men cease in
England.

EDITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS.

[Where books are cited only once, the reference has been given above, with sufficient detail for identification. The following notes will explain the shorter titles, used for books more frequently quoted.]

Æthelwerd. His Chronicle was printed in Savile's *Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores post Bedam*, Frankfort, 1601, and reprinted in *Mon. Hist. Brit.* The manuscript was burnt.

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The six Chronicles are printed in parallel columns in the edition of Thorpe (*Rolls Series*, 1861). Unfortunately Thorpe's translation gives a conflated text, so that without reference to the Anglo-Saxon it is impossible to tell which Chronicle is being followed. Earle's edition (*Two of the Saxon Chronicles parallel*, 1865) gave a valuable introduction, and the Introduction, Notes, and Indexes of Dr. Plummer's edition (*Clarendon Press*, 1892-99) are quite indispensable. For convenience of reference Thorpe's six-text edition remains essential.

Annales Cambriac. The earliest form of these *Annals* (entries from A.D. 453 to A.D. 954) has been edited by E. Phillimore in *Y Cymmrodor*, ix (1888). The later form was edited by J. Williams ab Ithel in the *Rolls Series*, 1860.

Asser. *Life of King Alfred*, ed. W. H. Stevenson, *Clarendon Press*, 1904.

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Bede. The *Ecclesiastical History*, the *History of the Abbots*, the *Epistle to Ecgberht*, and the anonymous *History of the Abbots* (on which Bede based his version), are given in Plummer's edition of Bede's *Opera Historica* (2 vols., *Clarendon Press*, 1896). Bede's *Life of S. Cuthbert* will be found in the *Opera Minora*, edited by J. Stevenson,

English Historical Society, 1841. The *Chronica Majora* which Bede appended to his *De Temporum Ratione* will be found in *Mon. Germ. Hist., Auct. Ant.*, xiii, *Chronica Minora*, iii (ed. Mommsen, 1898). A convenient but inaccurate edition of Bede's collected works is that of Giles (1843).

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